

## Meralomas Shut Down the Ravens, Taking Two from their West Side Rivals

By Stefan Schulson

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Vancouver, B.C. – With field conditions at Connaught Park less than favourable, the Meralomas made their way down Fourth Avenue to picturesque Jericho Park to take on the UBCOB Ravens. The Lomas' premier side came into the game sporting a 5-0 record, fresh off a hard-fought victory over the Oak Bay Castaways the previous weekend, while the Ravens sat at 2-3 on the outside of the playoff picture and looking to reassert themselves as a factor in the league hierarchy.

While the Ravens had won the first game between the two clubs back in September, the Meralomas were not about to leave Jericho without a victory this time out. The Lomas got on the scoreboard first courtesy of a penalty kick from fullback Mike Hall. With the early lead, the Lomas began to put sustained pressure on the Ravens' defense. Working their way deep into the offensive zone, the Lomas ran a series of pick-and-goes until the ball found its way into the hands of winger Shawn Mercier who crossed the try line for his first tally of the afternoon. Hall's convert took the score to 10-0 in favour of the Lomas. After an extended period of play between the 22's, the Ravens surrendered a hands-in penalty and Hall again notched the kick to take the score to 13-0.

The Ravens began to test the Lomas defense as the half wore on, but were unable to breach the defensive wall anchored solidly by lock Brian Erichsen. Near the end of the first frame, the Ravens had worked their way down to the doorstep of the Lomas' goal line, but had to settle for a mere 3 points on a hands-in penalty, making the halftime score 13-3.

In the second half, the Meralomas wasted no time taking control of the game, moving the ball sideline to sideline, stretching the Ravens' defensive structure. Ten minutes into the half, Mike Hall made a diving catch on an Old Boys' clearance kick, quickly gathered his feet and sent the ball across the field into the eager hands of Mercier who easily outpaced the opposing winger for a 40-yard scoring run.

With the score at 18-3, the Lomas continued their offensive onslaught. From a center field scrum, the ball was spun wide out to center Sam Jenkins who slipped through a series of tackles before offloading to Mercier. Once again, the elusive winger turned the corner for another 40-yard scoring jaunt, his third try of the afternoon.

As the half wore down, the Meralomas made one last foray into the Old Boys' zone. The Ravens' gamely defended the line, but eventually flanker Luke Dineley found a seam in the defense, taking the offload through the gap for the Lomas' final try of the day. Hall's convert made the score 30-3 as the final whistle blew.

In the first division game, the Lomas rolled to a 28-14 victory. Led by veteran flanker "Crazy" Dave Stephen at his scavenging best and some solid ball distribution from flyhalf Scott Larson, the Meralomas put together a solid team effort to run their record to 4-2. Tries were scored by prop Ryan Howe, #8 Markus Keinhorst, and man-of-the-match Dave Stephen. Larson added two penalties and a convert to round out the scoring.

The third division Delta Force were finally back in action, playing the Surrey Beavers up at Balaclava Park. The return of some old faces made the difference as the thirds rolled to a 41-14 victory, making amends for a loss to the same Beavers in the fall season. Tries came from captain Rudi Conachey, Drazen "the VP" Boticki, Buck Payne (2), and Lucas Wall (2), with both Wall and rookie Alex Earl contributing a pair of conversions. And in a surprising note from the game sheet, coach and starting centre Rohan Brial apparently notched a drop goal. Beaver pelt hats for everyone!

This coming weekend, the premier and first division sides take on the high-flying UVic Vikes while the thirds play SFU, with all three games scheduled to be contested at Connaught Park.