

Scots show ominous form

LIAM HYSLOP
RUGBY

Scots College's First XV looks to be as strong as ever as they reach the midway point of their pre-season. Last year's beaten national championship finalists overwhelmed Lindsfarne College 31-3 yesterday at their home ground to qualify for the final of the Presbyterian Schools Rugby Quadrangular.

It was far from a polished performance on attack, but Scots' defence rarely looked like being broken.

Lindsfarne were much the better side in the opening 20 minutes as Scots struggled to get out of their own half. But they had just three points to show for their efforts and Scots scored with their first real attacking opportunity soon after when prop Moala Katoa was put into a gap in the midfield and ran 20 metres to score.

Scots centre Tai Neli, who played for Aotea College last year, scored their second before half-time, putting a big right arm fend on a Lindsfarne defender before dashing away to dot down near the posts.

The second half was all Scots as they started to get into their groove. Daniel Brown and Jack Loader scored midway through the half, before the impressive Connor Garden-Bachop completed the win.

It was a generally pleasing performance for first-year Scots coach Sam Rasch, who moved from his assistant's role to the top job when Filo Tiatia left to become forwards coach at Japanese Super Rugby side the Sunwolves in January.

"It was pretty scrappy to begin with, but when we started getting into our work and scoring tries and going through our structure we started to put some points on them," he said.

"Lindsfarne are a good team and were always going to be competitive that first 50-odd minutes, so we just had to wear them down. Obviously near the end there we just started playing some Scots rugby and scoring some tries."

It was Scots' third pre-season game following a 19-17 loss to Nelson College and a 25-17 win over Marlborough Boys' College last week.

They lost a lot of turnovers at the breakdown against Lindsfarne, which they can not do in



Scots College centre Tai Neli gets an offload away during his side's win over Lindsfarne College yesterday.

PHOTO: CAMERON BURNELL/FAIRFAX NZ

At a glance

Scots College 31 (Moala Katoa, Tai Neli, Daniel Brown, Jack Loader, Connor Garden-Bachop tries, Malo Manuao 3 con) Lindsfarne 3 (Josh Dearden pen). HT: 14-3.

there have been a few new guys."

Along with Neli, the new players include his former Aotea team-mate Werdna Maligi at prop, Heretaunga College's lock Tama Kapene, Wellington College's back Manaaki Boyle-Tiatia and Jaylen Tuapola from Australia. They have big boots to fill after the team lost year 13 backs Peter and Thomas Umaga-Jensen, prop Alex Fidow and lock Henry Mexted.

Rasch himself has a lot to prove as he steps in for Tiatia, who was at the ground due to the Sunwolves having a bye.

"It's big shoes to fill with Filo Tiatia and [Wellington Lions coach] Earl [Va'a] the year before. I'm loving it, it's my passion and I want to give back to these kids and to the school and the community."

In other pre-season results, last year's Wellington champions St Pat's Town picked up a 28-15 win over St Bede's in Christchurch thanks to tries to Keelan Whitman, Zac Aldridge, Nuri Kaya and Adam McLean.

They've also cruised to wins over Tawa College (78-14) and Rathkeale College (76-7). St Pat's Stream had a good

hitout to win the annual Hope Cup competition between the Hutt Valley schools, beating St Bernard's 22-3 in the final.

So far this year a Wellington College Headmaster's XV have lost to Hastings Boys' 33-10 and beaten Tu Toa 77-0. They travel to play Feilding Boys' High School this weekend.

Rongotai College lost 22-17 to Nelson College earlier this month, while Bishop Viard College showed what they can offer with a 31-27 win Wairarapa College.

The pre-season really kicks off on May 7, when the First XV festival takes place - which includes the best teams from around the lower North Island - and premier grading begins.



New Zealand Pony Club eventing A1 champion Aiden Viviers, in action with Giselle II at an event in Manawatu last year. PHOTO: MURRAY WILSON/FAIRFAX NZ

Viviers jumps to national glory

LIAM HYSLOP
EVENTING

Aiden Viviers is riding high after winning his first national eventing championship.

The 17-year-old St Pat's Silverstream student won the A1 (17-21 age group) division of the New Zealand Pony Club Association Eventing Championships at the Canterbury Area Pony Club over the weekend.

The three-day event started well enough for Viviers and his 12-year-old mare Giselle II, as they made it through the dressage in fourth.

The pair then went clear and under time through a technical and long cross-country course, as the top three all stumbled.

"I went into the showjumping on Sunday in the lead," he said.

"I was last to go and I couldn't have a rail down, I had to go clear, and I managed to do that, so yeah, that was it."

It was an understated way to describe a magnificent achievement as he became the first Belmont Pony Club rider since Lauren Currie in 2009 to claim that title.

He had competed twice before in the under-16 age group at the event, but had not won, so said to win it this year was a surprise.

Viviers first climbed on a horse at the age of nine, with riding in his blood.

His grandfather, Jim

Hoddinott, still competes at the age of 72, while his grandmother, mother and aunty, as well as his younger sister, also compete.

His grandparents bred Giselle II and he got the ride on her a couple of years ago.

Since then they have slowly been making their way through the pony club ranks, culminating in Sunday's win.

"That was what I had been building up to all season, going through area trials and all that to get into the team - although I was the only one eligible for that class in my area."

He stays fit by riding Giselle II five times a week, which benefits both horse and rider.

"Every horse is different, you have to work on it to get the horse fit, as well as yourself, it's a big job."

"Usually I try and get a dressage lesson off Stephen Field each week as well, he was the coach of the team and has been a big help."

"I would probably do three days a week working on dressage and then a couple of other days a week to canter around and make sure she's fit enough, taking her on a bit of a gallop."

Viviers will take on New Zealand's best eventers at the season-ending senior national championships in Taupo from May 12, but beyond that he will just take each ride as it comes.

"I just want to keep doing what I'm doing, it's great fun and I'll just take everything as it comes."

Realistic Paddon seeks all-round improvement

RALLYING

New Zealand rally ace Hayden Paddon is targeting improved performances on tarmac as a key to his world championship challenge.

Paddon created history when he became the first New Zealand driver to win a full WRC event with victory at Rally Argentina on Monday.

The win lifted the 28-year-old to second on the WRC table, though he remains 39 points behind leader Sebastien Ogier of France.

Yesterday Paddon was relishing his new-found status but was also being realistic.

A title challenge wasn't on his mind for 2016 though his Argentina victory has given him confidence to believe it could happen down the line as his career develops further.

But he believes he needs to become a better all-around driver for that to happen, singling out his work on hard surfaces for improvement.

"We want to target podiums for all gravel rallies and progress on tarmac rallies," Paddon said dur-

ing a stopover on his return to New Zealand where he will drive the Whangarei event this weekend.

He says his work on the tarmac is all about practice.

"The more rallies and time in the car the more the confidence will grow. [We] just need to keep working," Paddon said.

He has shown rapid learning and development in the high-pressure environment of the WRC.

The 2016 calendar features a three-event block in August and September where tarmac rallies are held in Germany, China and France.

Eight events of the 14-stop calendar are on Paddon's preferred gravel surface, including the next event in Portugal.

His new ranking of No 2 after just four events this year will give him the luxury of an early drive over the stages, sitting behind Ogier.

He believes that will have major benefits to keeping him at the right end of the field.

"I'm excited to be at the front. We will have some nice lines in front of us to follow," Paddon said. "Now we will have an equal



Hayden Paddon says he didn't have much time to celebrate his WRC win in Argentina because of a need to quickly return to New Zealand. PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

measure with Seb, so the goal will be to get as close as possible and learn from his lines."

He believed there was still development left in his Hyundai car to push Ogier.

"We still have some work to do in slow/mid speed sections, so we will continue developing the suspension and geometry."

But the Argentina effort proved they were closing the gap on the VWs.

"We are getting closer - in fast sections I think we have a better package now," he said.

Paddon said his victory was taking time to register.

"It's an amazing feeling but don't think it has really sunk in. Maybe a few more days," Paddon said, adding he had little time to celebrate because of the rush to

return to New Zealand. "We had a good team dinner with everyone involved. I'm not a big party person so was then to the hotel to pack."

Asked what it felt like to be No 2 in the rankings, Paddon revealed his competitiveness.

"Well, it's not No 1, so there's still some work to do."

Ogier was taking his 14.3s loss to Paddon well.

Ogier praised Paddon's speed thought the repeated El Condor stage, which he described as "the roughest stage I have ever driven".

"In the last one Hayden did an amazing time. He went for it and I didn't do enough. I had the feeling that my driving was clean but I was not pushing too hard because I was scared to take zero points," Ogier said.

Roosters stung with hefty fine

RUGBY LEAGUE

The NRL has handed the Sydney Roosters a \$40,000 fine over Trent Robinson's post-match spray at referee Ben Cummins on Anzac Day.

The governing body issued breach notices last night, proposing \$20,000 penalties for Robinson's criticism of Cummins in the press conference on Monday night and for an incident in which he allegedly confronted the referee in the Allianz Stadium tunnel after the 20-18 defeat to St George Illawarra.

"We cannot stand by and allow any club to deliberately and blatantly attack our referees,"

NRL chief executive Todd Greenberg said.

"Not only is it a breach of the rules which are there to protect our referees from abuse, but it sets a bad example to the rest of the game, particularly juniors."

"We know from experience that young people imitate their NRL heroes and attacking referees is simply not acceptable. We are also trying to encourage young people to become referees, and public attacks like this do nothing to achieve that goal."

In a statement the NRL said Robinson had "allegedly approached and harassed referee Ben Cummins in the Allianz Stadium tunnel at the end of the match" before attacking "the

credibility of Mr Cummins in his post-match press conference".

Greenberg was also the target of post-match anger from Roosters chairman Nick Politis, who vented his anger over the use of the bunker in an exchange in the tunnel, but there was no sanction over that.

Greenberg said Robinson had not followed the proper procedure to voice his concerns.

"There are proper channels to vent those concerns and they were not followed in this instance," he said.

"Our referees boss, Tony Archer, is happy to talk to any club about issues which arise out of a game and that is the right way to address any problems."

Revamped Warriors to face Dragons

At a glance

Warriors to play St George in Auckland on Sunday: David Fusitu'a, Jonathan Wright, Solomone Kata, Manu Vatuvei, Thomas Leuluai, Shaun Johnson, Jacob Lillyman, Issac Luke, Ben Matulino, Bodene Thompson, Ryan Hoffman (captain), Charlie Gubb. Interchange: Jazz Tevaga, Sam Lisone, Albert Vete, Shaun Lane, James Gavet.

Tuimoaloa Lolohea, who was forced off the field with a knee injury after only 26 minutes against the

Storm. Lolohea is expected to be out for up to two weeks meaning Fusitu'a moves back to fullback.

Also ruled out is loose forward Simon Mannerling who is expected to be sidelined for one or two weeks, after having his lip stitched back together by a plastic surgeon in Melbourne on Monday night.

Charlie Gubb will start for the first time in his career in replacing Mannerling.

With Fusitu'a named at fullback, Jonathan Wright will start on the right wing and veteran prop Jacob Lillyman is also in the run-on line-up after being used from the bench in the last two games.

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