

Rugby Royal High v Portobello High School U16 Brewin-Dolphin Regional Plate Final




Report – Bill McNie Photos – John Preece

Portobello High beat Royal High 22-12 at Murrayfield last Friday evening to claim the Brewin Dolphin Scottish Schools U16 Edinburgh Regional Plate.

After missing with a penalty attempt 5 minutes into the game, Portobello claimed the first try ten minutes after that, good handling along their backline allowing their left winger to outpace his opposite number and the Royal High fullback to score in the corner.

Royal High hit back barely two minutes later after taking a tap penalty in front of the Portobello posts, livewire centre Andrew Fraser touching down to the right of the posts. That made it 10 all, both conversions having been missed.

Porty went further ahead twenty minutes into the half. They missed a penalty kick after Royal High were penalised for holding on, but, after Royal High knocked on in front of their own posts, the Portobello backs swung the ball left before their fullback ran in for the try.

 Royal High danger man Ross McCann nearly equalised four minutes after that, but (as was the case for most of the game) was well tackled as he sprinted into the Portobello 22.

Royal High received a warning from the referee for handling in the ruck as the first half drew to a close.

The Barnton boys enjoyed the majority of play at the start of

the second half, but Portobello drew further ahead after 10 minutes. The try came after a Royal High kick deep into the Portobello 22; the Portobello backs made the most of the open spaces in front of them and the firm Astro underfoot to run the ball back for the score after more flowing handling. That made the score 15-5 in Portobello's favour.

Royal High refused to lie down, however, taking inspiration from the rampaging runs of prop Faraz Nadeem. Fifteen minutes into the half, another kick deep into Portobello territory allowed Andrew Fraser to burst through the opposition backline to claim his second try. Ali Poore converted to make the score 15-12.

Portobello were over the Royal High line again just seven minutes after that, but a knock on denied them the try. They did, however, wrap the game up after 25 minutes, winning a scrum against the head close to the Royal High line before running the ball in from close range. The conversion made the final score 22-12 to Portobello, who were duly presented with their trophy at half time in the Edinburgh game on the main pitch.

Royal High were disappointed after the game, but can take great heart from the way that they competed against a hard tackling and physical Portobello side that included a number of S5 (albeit still U16) pupils.

Injuries prior to the final had tested the strength in depth of the Royal High side, while the absence of coach Graham Shiel on Scotland Sevens duties can't have helped their preparations for the big game.

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