

Eagles Eliminated in Plate Semifinal

Written by Pat Clifton

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Wales eliminated the USA with a 26-19 win in the Plate Semifinals. The Eagles never led, but they were in the match the entire 14 minutes and had possession deep in the Welsh end with a chance to win the game late.

Wales tapped the opening kickoff into touch, giving the Eagles a lineout to start the game. The throw was long, and Wales scooped up the ball and went on the offensive first, and though the Eagles were resilient in defense, turning the ball over inside their own 22, they committed two penalties that helped Wales take the lead.

On the ensuing kickoff, Harries egregiously undercut Zack Test, who was high in the air playing the ball. Harries was sent off, and Test shook off the illegal hit to stay on the field.

The USA switched fields on the penalty play, and Luke Hume broke the Welsh line. The Eagles recycled and passed out to Folau Niua, who split the disadvantaged defense and cruised in for a try.

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The Eagles took the restart, but Jack Halalilo gave possession back to Wales when he kicked it away, leading to a 22-meter drop, which Wales scored directly from to take the lead back. Colin Hawley won the next kickoff, too, but the Eagles lost possession after being held up in contact. Wales won their scrum and cleared to touch to end the half.

Some poor tackling undid the Eagles at the onset of the second half, when Niua seemed to have Will Thomas wrangled, but failed to actually put his shoulder in him, allowing Thomas to score and extend the Welsh lead to 19-7.

Nick Edwards returned the favor, taking advantage of some lackluster tackling from Wales, fending off one defender after slipping past another en route to a long-range try. The conversion was missed, leaving the Eagles down 7.

The USA then knotted the game up when Carlin Isles was put in a one-on-one situation by Luke Hume. Isles toyed with his defender, going down in the corner of the try zone, without dotting the ball down, and then he got back up and centered the try. Niua converted to tie the match at 19-19.

Isles made another break deep into Welsh territory on the final American possession and managed to get the ball back to Hume after being tackled. With support around him, Hume opted to stay out of contact and threw a panicked rainbow pass towards Test. Wales' James Davies easily caught the pass in stride and scored under the posts to end the game.

USA 19

Tries: Edwards, Niua, Isles

Cons: Niua (2)

Wales 26

Tries: Thomas, Davies, Harries, Webber

Cons: Thomas (3)