

## Beach Secures Playoff Spot

Written by  
Saturday, 23 April 2011 11:41

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Old Puget Sound defeated the Denver Barbarians 41-33 Saturday evening at Dick's Sporting Goods Park in the Mile High City.

The victory ended the Barbarians season at 2-4 and improved OPSB to 4-1. They have one more game left, against the Utah Warriors, but by winning this game the Seattle club ensured that win or lose next weekend, they will be the #2 team in the Western Conference, and will play at SFGG May 14.

"We're over the moon about it," said OPSB scrumhalf Ryan Bishop. "We still have a lot of things to work on and we're going to build on this and use the Utah game next week to get better."

Bishop said Beach had struggled against Denver in their first matchup in Seattle March 19, unable to retain ball.

"In that first game they had the ball for 65 minutes of the game," said Bishop. "So this time around we really wanted to have better continuity. This time it was much better. We moved the ball well, and out backline came to form and really clicked. It was an all-around effort, but it started with us being able to control the ball."

A dozen tries were scored in the entertaining game, with Denver opening the scoring with a converted try to take an early lead, before OPSB responded with a converted try of their own

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through Robert Fitzpatrick. Teammate Filimoni Botitu crossed for the first of his three tries on the day shortly after. Denver immediately replied with two more tries, before OPSB responded with two more of their own to take a 24-21 halftime lead.

The second half continued at the furious pace, with OPSB stretching their lead to 34-21 before the hosts cut into the lead. Denver closed to within a point and was just a missed conversion away from taking the lead, trailing 33-34. Denver had another penalty opportunity as time was about to expire, but elected to go for a lineout which was subsequently repelled by OPSB. OPSB claimed another converted try from Ryan Bishop in injury time to make the final score 41-33. OPSB's head coach Evan Haigh enjoyed the back and forth struggle with Denver, especially the "very fast venue where we were able to get our outside backs into some space and use our speed. We wanted to win it today and go through to the semi final and not have to do it at home next week".

All the tries were scored by the backs today for OPSB, including Filimoni Botitu's hat trick. Indeed Botitu "gave us fits all day long, reeling off several long runs" reflects Denver's Rob O'Connor. Denver's try scorers included prop Josh Masek, number 8 Tommy Pasque and center Christian Sarmiento.

Although OPSB is in the semifinal against San Francisco Golden Gate on May 14th, Haigh knows they have a more immediate task at hand in that they host the Utah Warriors next weekend in the final regular season game. He notes Utah's style is somewhat similar to SFGG which will help in his preparation for the semifinal, but he is acutely aware that Utah will relish another crack at OPSB, given that there was only a point in the difference between the teams in that game.