

Golden Gate Shines in Semi

Written by
Saturday, 14 May 2011 21:45



San Francisco Golden Gate survived a slightly ricky start to eventually manhandle Old Puget Sound Beach in Saturday's Super League semifinal, winning 55-22.

The hosts got out to an early lead, but Head Coach Paul Keeler wasn't thrilled with his team's execution.

"The thing that made me feel like we might be able to take control was actually our mistakes," Keeley told RUGBYMag.com. "We had a couple of scoring opportunities where if we'd just had a better pass, or softer hands, we would have scored. I thought to myself, OK, if we just settle down we can do some things."

SFGG captain Danny LaPrevotte told his players to relax and settle down, and after that the tries started to flow.

Sparked by an outstanding game from tighthead prop Simone Laulaupeaalu, who was active in all aspects of play, SFGG stormed out to a 40-10 lead.

Tevita Okusi scored two, as did flyhalf Volney Rouse, while Laulaupeaalu, Mile Pulu and LaPrevotte also added tries. Another one in on the scoring was No. 8 Samu Manoa, playing his final game at SFGG's home field before he goes off to join Northampton in the Aviva Premiership in the UK. To cap off his match Manoa also got to kick a conversion.

OPSB kicked an early penalty through fullback and player-coach Evan Haigh, and a try from wing Fili Botitu.

Down 40-10, OPSB kept on the attack and Haigh and Botitu both scored late. Pate Tuilevuka

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converted one of them.

But SFGG had the final word, as Hector Quiles went over for the final try.

"The score might make you think Seattle isn't all that tough a team, but I can tell you they are," said Keeler. "We did some things better than the last time we played them. We defended better and our scrums were a little better. But we had to work very hard to beat them."

The key positive for SFGG was how quickly they played.

"All season our #1 goal was to push the pace of the game and play as fast as we can," said Keeler.

But Laulaupeaalu's play was a special feature.

"Mone covered every part of the field," said Keeler. "He had the sort of game that got him considered for the national team a few years ago. He was outstanding."

SFGG 55

Tries: Okusi 2, Rouse 2, LaPrevotte, Laulaupeaalu, Manoa, Pulu, Quiles
Convs: Rouse 4, Manoa

OPSB 22

Tries: Haigh, Botitu 2
Convs: Haigh, Tuilevuka
Pens: Haigh