

Berkeley Repeats as WPL Champ

Written by Jackie Finlan

Sunday, 11 November 2012 19:35

In back-to-back years, Berkeley is the Women's Premier League champion. The All Blues defeated WPL newcomer Glendale 39-5, a vast difference between the teams' match-ups during league season, when they split their games.



“We knew we lost games, had things to fix up,” Berkeley coach Kathy Flores said of the regular season. “Our bracket was tough, and so we were prepared coming in, having lost at times and experiencing that pressure. We were very lucky to be in the bracket that we were.”

Berkeley was on point today. They took on Glendale's hard-charging forwards and feisty backs. And when linebreaks did occur, the All Blues did an excellent job of flowing to the breakdown and turning over ball.

“When they played us before, they were quick over the ball, and we were slow over the ball,” Flores said. “So we knew if we weren't getting there fast enough that we were going to be losing ball. We worked on that during the season, getting to the ball quicker, getting over the ball quicker to try to deny the ball.”

Berkeley's forwards were particularly potent, gaining meters off of nearly every punch. Glendale prop Sarah Chobot and flanker Joanna Kitlinski were also very effective in piercing the line, but again, many of those breaks were turned over.

“We had a lot of front row players, and we were able to sub them out,” Flores commented on the difference in this year's team. “We used them wisely and subbed them out to try to tire out

Berkeley Repeats as WPL Champ

Written by Jackie Finlan

Sunday, 11 November 2012 19:35

their front rows, because that battle up front can be something. I've been lucky enough this season to have 6-7 front row players."

In tight, Katie Chou was very effective in finding space where there was none. The MVP accounted for the first two tries after systematic phases got Berkeley to the tryline.

"The interesting thing is that she came out of the game Friday because of her back and she couldn't even walk Friday night," Flores said. "We were lucky to have our chiropractor with us, and she worked her, stretched her. Yesterday she was a little better, got in the water at the beach, and today she said she was ready to go. We were prepared to have her for 15-20 minutes, but she kept going. She's an animal, and we want to keep her on the field."

Quite simply, Berkeley had more possession, which allowed Margaret Sharp and Sarah Walsh (2) to finish off nice phase play for tries. When the All Blues were backed up on defense, Bryson's boot routinely relieved the pressure with booming kicks. She slotted four conversions and two penalties.

Glendale had some miscues between the halfbacks, but when they had the ball, they ran hard, found some space. Berkeley fullback Irene Gardner was superb on defense, and was fully composed when alone on the sideline or open field. Glendale kept pummeling away throughout the match and were rewarded with a try in the 83rd minute, courtesy of No. 8 Taryn Brennan.

"When you prepare a team, you're never sure what team's going to show up depending on everyone's mental state," Flores said. "From the get-go, our team was just – it was something we hadn't seen. This was a great time to peak; we finally got there. But they were completely composed about what they wanted to do. Brandon and I didn't do a whole lot. Couple words at halftime for both games. I'd love to be egotistical and say I changed the game, but that wasn't the case."

Even though this was Berkeley's second championship, it was just as special, if not more, than their first.

Berkeley Repeats as WPL Champ

Written by Jackie Finlan

Sunday, 11 November 2012 19:35

“We won last year but by the skin of our teeth in both matches,” Flores said. “This year we pretty much blew it out. So this one is very special; the team did all the right things. That’s not to say the other team didn’t, but this is special because they played so well.”