

## Aurora Holds Off New Team

Written by Bernie Decker  
Monday, 21 February 2011 13:25

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*By Bernie Decker*

Aurora defeated league newcomer Monument Hill under a blowy and foreboding sky Saturday in Colorado HS action Saturday.

In a match made scrappy owing to the weather and the long winter break, teams suffered knock-ons and errant passes early on, but Aurora ended up winners 22-5.

Steadfast defense by Monument led by flanker Caleb Sweet denied the Saracens in the opening 20 minutes, even as the hosts were camped in their opponents' half throughout.

Early-stage jittery handling errors stuttered play both ways and the boys grew accustomed to the “Crouch – pause – touch – engage!” cadence of referee Brandon Khumalo, and the rookies in the scrums settled to their tasks admirably well.

With the wind kicking up from the south end of the pitch the Saracen forwards secured possession at Monument’s 10-meter line. Ball run wide enabled flyhalf Carter Zanella to create and exploit an overlap, then slip inside the defense, and 55 meters later, dot down in-goal: Aurora 5–0 at 22 minutes.

Powerful forward phase movements, and cunning dartful runs by the backs from each side saw the gainline fluctuate between the 22s, though no more scoring took place in the half.

The second half started as the first had ended, with the packs slamming their way in fits and starts at their opposition: first Aurora charged and set the piece, then Monument turned ball over and countered in powerful displays of forward action.

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And then the backs got into it. Aurora outside center Rodney Vea fended off a would-be tackler shy of his 10 meter line, stepped inside a pair of stoppers, and motored fifty plus yards into goal: Aurora 10–0 at 42 minutes.

Aurora's big, quick backline secured their third try as wing three-quarters Tana Vea broke through the defense and scampered 35 meters for the unconverted try and a 15 – 0 scoreline at 46. Saracens were able to pick up the bonus point in the 55th minute when Neumi Mupa collected the try underposts after a thirty meter jaunt: conversion by hooker Filipe Fifita and a score of 22–0 as the clock wound down.

But with time ebbing Monument High Rugby Club's Cody Landrum dipped and dodged his way 25 meters into goal and touched down what will undoubtedly be the first of many tries from the Hill: Final score Aurora Saracens RC 22, Monument Hill RC 5.

Said MH coach Nick Abbott of his team's inaugural fixture, "I am quite proud of our boys. They all stepped up huge with heart and courage, first game ever. Save for a few defensive lapses that led to Sarries' tries [it was a] darned evenly played match. We matched their physicality, I thought."

And their hosts were equally lavish with praise of the newcomers: "We didn't expect such opposition," said Saracens coach Dave White, "Monument deserves kudos for attaining the knowledge they have in such a short time and demonstrating it on the pitch. Though I felt we executed some facets of the game well, there are things to be accomplished yet," he added.

Scoring:

Aurora Saracens 22

Tries: Zanella, R. Vea, Mupa, T. Vea

Convs: Fifita

Monument Hill 5

Tries: Landrum

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Referee: B. Khumalo