

PCRFU HS and U19 Semis

Written by RUGBYMag Staff
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Defending U19 champion United defeated Liberty 24-17 Friday in the Pacific Coast playoffs. United advances to the Saturday final, to which goes the union's second seed to Nationals.

In the other semifinal, Hayward defeated Red Mountain 32-20 to set up the final for this spot at the U19 championship.

Highland has already claimed the territory's top seed.

Meanwhile, in the PCRFU HS semis, Jesuit defeated Idaho champs Capital 56-5, while NorCal runners up Dixon had a lot more trouble with Utah-based Snow Canyon, edging the visitors 35-31.

Idaho battled hard, but eventually the Jesuit backs were able to break through.

Liberty scored first on a hard run by center Mone Angilau. While Liberty's backs were dangerous, they had trouble linking effectively and that hurt them.

United put together two scores moving the ball back and forth among their backs. United's flyhalf, Russ Parai, controlled the tempo and pace of the game well and was an elusive runner

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also. His kicking kept Liberty pinned in their own end.

United outside center Savern Rapana, just having joined the team this past week, scored both tries to give United a 12-5 lead.

Then United center Mateaka Hausia finished off a series of United phases and an astute quick tap from scrumhalf Kage Green.

Down 19-5 Liberty had a prime scoring opportunity when wing Chandler Jenkins broke into open field with just one United player to beat. However that one player was United fullback Brandon Benavides, who didn't miss his man.

Bending under the United attack, Liberty got an important try, as they found Jenkins one more time and he blazed away for a key try. 19-12 at halftime.

Liberty scored early in the second half to make it 19-17, and the game was completely up for grabs. Neither team seemed able to take control of the match after that, in part because United lock Walter Fifita would consistently steal Liberty's lineouts.

Hurt by some iffy tackling and inability to guard against Green's quick taps on penalties, Liberty had to scramble on defense, and were ultimately burned for one more try.