USA scrumhalf Robbie Shaw helped Bristol to a 17-14 win in the final of the British & Irish Cup Saturday.

Bristol boss Paul Hull, departing after a 22-year association with the club, said: “The overwhelming feeling is I’m so happy that we won. It’s been a difficult year but to turn it around in the last few weeks of the season and get some silverware for the players, the board and most importantly the supporters.”

For Bedford it was more heartache after their RFU Championship semi final defeat to Worcester Warriors six days previously and forwards coach Martin Haynes added: “I can’t fault the effort of the players all season. But we didn’t perform today and if you don’t come first you come last.”

The first 20 minutes was a litany of errors as the drizzle fell, from spilled balls to failing to bind properly at the scrum.

Canadian international James Pritchard kicked the Blues into a 3-0 lead after eight minutes with Ed Barnes failing to draw the scores level five minutes later.

But Barnes made amends with two penalties in two minutes to put Bristol 6-3 up and then landed a third when Alex Rae was sin-binned for lying on the wrong side of the ball just before halftime.

Elliott showed his pace early in the second half when he hacked on a loose ball and then with Jack Adams up in support he collected and won the race to the line.

Barnes missed the conversion and Pritchard pulled back three points but then missed a long range one when Bristol were penalized for crossing

Bedford had all the pressure, pounding the line with Paul Tupai leading the charge but they had to settle for a penalty from Pritchard.

Barnes extended the lead to 17-9 with 10 minutes remaining but there was drama as Handre Scmidt went over from Veennendaal's flat pass off the back of the scrum.

Pritchard missed the conversion and Bristol defended to the death to give the Memorial Stadium something to cheer about.

Bristol Rugby: G Watkins; A Elliott, J Adams, J Fatialofa, D Norton; E Barnes, R Shaw (R Bolt 75), M Irish (M Vunipola 68), D Blaney, D Crompton (W Thompson 53) M Sambucetti (D Barry 66), R Winters, I Grieve (capt), J Merriman, D Montagu. Reps(not used): O Hayes, M Mama, M Davies.

Scorers: Try – Elliott; **Pens** – Barnes (4)

Bedford Blues: E Thrower (D Taylor 50); H Schmidt, M Dorrian, O Dodge,, J Pritchard (capt); J Sharp, W Chudley (D Veenendaal 50); D Seal, D Richmond, P Boulton (S Walsh 57), M Howard, G Kruis, G Gillanders (S Tomes 66), A Rae, P Tupai. Reps (no used): C Locke, C Goodman, T Bedford.

Yellow card: Rae 40

Scorers: Try – Schmidt; **Pens** – Pritchard (3).

Referee: Andrew McMenemy (SRU)