

Magpies vs Stags Review

Contributed by Billsy
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When coaches Peter Russell, Tom Coventry, and Captain Danny Lee sat down to devise a game plan to implement against Southland on Sunday they must have been snacking on the finest bluff oysters. Why because they came up with a pearl.

This performance by the Magpies was outstanding, and the players who executed the plan deserve nothing but the highest credit. By playing to this standard the Magpies have shown already they are a very good team, well capable of winning a lot more games in the Air New Zealand Cup.

The forward pack was magnificent with Micheal Johnson switching from the blindside to the open absolutely outstanding. Not far behind was Arizona Taumaloulo who more than matched his All Black opposite Clarke Dermody.

The victory was set up in the first half when the Magpies playing into a stiff breeze gained the upper hand over Southlands pack through outstanding mauling, scrummaging, and sheer desperation to get to the loose ball. At times at the breakdown the Magpies had five players there to Southlands two, and were turning over possession, much to the disgust of Southland halfback Jimmy Cowan.

True Southland did blow two or three try scoring opportunities in the first half, but this is what pressure, and an unrelenting attitude can do to the opposition.

When Hawkes Bay turned with the breeze in the second half, nothing changed, except the intensity on Southland increased, with Hawkes Bay playing with added confidence, made their more fancied opposition look pedestrian and second rate.

A word of warning to the Bay Union, please sign Zac Guildford to a long term contract now. This boy is quicker, than a politician at a free lunch. Not far behind in the backline were Jason Shoemark, Ben Batger, and halfback and captain Danny Lee. Matt Birquist was also high class with his goalkicking and tactical approach.

With Israel Dagg, Lote Raikabula, and Tom Symes now available Peter Russell and co are in a position of not who to pick, but who do I leave out.

Not a bad position to be in is it?