

Barbarians avoid their Waterloo, taking must-win game

By John Reich

The Aurora Barbarians senior men travelled to the Rogers Sport Complex in Cambridge to take on Waterloo County for two matches on Saturday.

In what had been seen as a 'must win' game for the Barbarians, the York Region rugby squad escaped from the basement of the Ontario Marshall Premiership defeating County and pulling ahead of the winless Pirates by two points in the standings.

Head Coach Ian McLeod had to juggle his line-up before the kickoff when Ontario standout Jon West was unable to start. In addition, McLeod chose to insert rookie second row Zack Watson and replace injured Stephan Seccareccia with second year Mike Griffiths in the back row.

The two youngsters proved their mettle and each turned in an outstanding game against a very determined Waterloo side.

The Barbarians came out of the gate at full throttle with flank forward Eric Charest picking his way through for a try a scant seven minutes in.

Mark Denton, playing at fullback, was dead-on for the conversion and added a penalty kick five minutes later to improve the lead to 10 - 0. However, the County Club, who have had an unlucky season, fought back and showed great skill in ball retention and hard nose rugby forcing errors and clawing their way to three tries before the half was over to lead 17 - 10 at the break.

With the wind in their face and a light rain setting in the Barbarians played unevenly in the first twenty minutes of the second half, picking up a penalty kick by Denton, but yielding a try to trail 22 - 13. However, the slick ball proved to be a challenge for the Waterloo side and after having a player sent to the 'sin bin' for ten minutes, a mishandled kick lead to a run-in try for Denton and with his conversion the score was to 22-20.

Just after the referee announced 'one minute to play', the Barbarians had a line out just inside Waterloo's 22 meter line. Despite a knock down by Waterloo, the Barbarians recovered the ball and started a frantic drive toward the Waterloo goal.

While the drive bogged down, the ball remained in play until Aurora was able to feed it wide to centre Sean Sinel who used speed and a side step to touch down for a winning try, ending the game at 25 - 22.

In the second team match-up, the Barbarians' Development Side dominated the first half to lead 20 - 5 at the break, but could not hold the advantage against the wind when the teams switched ends, coming out on the losing side of a 23 - 20 final score.

Scoring tries for Aurora was Brad Legere and Matt Riggs. Kicker James Hulbert added two conversions and two penalty kicks.