

Depleted Barbarians lose at Balmy Beach

By John Reich

The Aurora Barbarians senior men's team travelled to Ashbridges Bay in Toronto last weekend to take on Balmy Beach for three games in the Ontario Rugby Premiership.

In the week leading up to the match, head coach Ian McLeod was advised that four of his first team starters from the last game had been invited by the Ontario Universities Athletic Association to suit up for an All-Star game being played in Boston on the same day against the NCAA ?A? level All-Americans.

In addition, three others were unavailable due to injury and two more due to personal commitments.

But the remaining starters and promoted development players did not disappoint and put in a spirited effort before succumbing to the league leading and undefeated Beach club.

In fact the game was very even through the first half and if not for some early nerves by kicker Mark Denton, the Aurora team could have been ahead at the half.

As it was, Derek Haines, D.J. Dillon and Eric Godwin rolled in tries for the Barbarians and two converts from Denton tied the York Region team with the Beach 19 - 19 after forty minutes.

Pressure from the Toronto Club early in the second half overwhelmed the young Barbarians who gave up four tries before rallying for one of their own by Austin St. Amant near full time.

The late score converted by Denton gave the Barbarians a valuable bonus point awarded when four or more tries are scored in a game, as well as a morale boost.

Despite the 43-26 loss Coach McLeod lauded his team's effort after the game.

?We went out of sync for about 20 minutes at the start of the second half,? he observed. ?A couple of missed tackles resulted in scores we should have prevented, but overall these guys played great. I asked them to step up and they did. Winning a bonus point over that club is not easy. No one else in the league is doing it. We will be better in the rematch at Fletchers Fields in September.?

The second team match up was a wash out for Aurora falling to the Beach's development side 51 -0. The game featured a half dozen players who worked double duty getting action in both the second and third team games to make up for the absent players.

The Barbarians third squad enjoyed a good day winning out 45 -20 over the Beach club getting tries from A.J. Luongo, Zack Watson, Liam Kennelly, Kieran Joyce, Frank Walker, James Hulbert and Justin Foy. Joyce added five converts in his 15 point day.

The Barbarians men's team takes next weekend off for Canada Day celebrations and returns to action on July 5 when they travel to Oakville to take on the Crusaders for three matches.

The Premiership teams tied at 24 in a game at Fletcher's Fields earlier this year.