

U18 Barbarians move to TRU Plate Championship semifinals



By Jake Courtepatte

Both the Under-18 'A' and 'B' Aurora Barbarians rugby squads are heading to the semifinals of the Toronto Rugby Union Plate Championship.

The quarterfinals kicked off last Thursday with the 'B' squad set to open against the Vaughan Yeomen in the early game. However, a lack of available players forced Vaughan to forfeit the match, automatically sending the Barbs to the next round.

The only match of the night would be the Barbarians A squad facing off against the Toronto Saracens, a team they had yet to see all year. With few injuries, the Barbs came into the game perhaps as strong as they were all season, along with the addition of Team Ontario players like Keaton Porter.

The Barbs came out strong on the cold and rainy August night, scoring four tries in the first half while maintaining a shutout in their own end. After another outpouring of offense in the second, the Barbs would take the game by a final score of 57 - 0.

After starting the season 0 - 3, the Barbs rallied late to finish in third place in the division with a respectable 3 - 3 record, missing the provincial playoffs by two points.

Barbarian Luke Travell credits plain old practice for the team's success at the midpoint of the season.

'We started off the season with some new players, and were getting low attendance at practice,' said Travell. 'But we had a really good practice last week and really came together.'

Travell scored two tries in the high-scoring win over Toronto.

'We cleaned it up. The referee even commented on how our game was a lot tighter than we've played earlier in the season.'

The Barbs' hard work has not gone unnoticed by coaching staff, as head coach Sandy Townsend said it's good to see his team 'finally gelling'.

'Over time, some guys have really grown into the positions we put them in, and that's with the support of their teammates. Are we at our best? I don't know, this was the first that we haven't had somebody new come to practice. So, we're still coming together, but it's a perfect time, and we've certainly got lots of momentum.'

The Barbarians now face two semi-final matches this week, with the 'A' squad hosting the Markham Irish and the 'B' squad hosting

the Ajax Wanderers. Both games will be held at Fletcher's Field in Markham.

?We're looking for the win,? said Travell. ?We won the tournament last year, so we're definitely looking for a repeat.?

For more information, visit www.aurorabarbarians.com.