

## Doylestown Dropgoal Seals Win

Written by Jackie Finlan  
Sunday, 22 May 2011 00:14

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Manassas, VA - In one of the best games of the day, Doylestown secured its return to the DII club quarterfinals in dramatic fashion, nailing a drop-goal in the final minutes to win 35-33 over the Village Lions.



Doylestown (yellow) hangs onto the win. (Andy Wagner photo)

“They made it a little too close,” Doylestown coach Bill Tomlinson said. “We played them earlier in the season and they beat us by four, so we knew what we were up for. That last-minute drop-goal was a storybook finish.”

But the game could have ended just before flyhalf Brian Beauregard had the opportunity for that spectacular dropgoal, as Doylestown forewent an opportunity at goal, just left of the posts inside the Village Lions’ 22 meter. Instead, the team opted for the kick to touch and lineout, where the ball then worked to the center of the field for the perfect lineup.

It certainly wasn’t what the Lions were expecting, considering Doylestown had scored two tries in the first half by pummeling the defense on the line, but it worked nonetheless.

“That’s all that matters at nationals,” Tomlinson confirmed.

The game began well for Doylestown, who built a 15-0 lead from a Mike Weir penalty, and tries from No. 8 Cory Collins and Matt Wyatt. Plagued by penalties and minor errors, the Lions fought to get into Doylestown territory, but during one of their most promising drives, decided against a couple of penalty kick opportunities in front of goal.

The Lions were eventually rewarded for their sustained effort, which saw the Lions with a lineout on Doylestown's 22 meter. Ball worked to outside center Lester Salanoa, who broke through

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multiple tacklers for the sheer-will try. It would be the first of his two scores, the second looking much like his first, 15-7.

But penalties continued to mar play – first, the Lions infringed in its end to allow Weir to hit another penalty (18-7) and then Doylestown had a player sent off. The extra space gave the Lions some room for Salanoa to once again run into the try zone, this time set up by flyhalf Danny Kroll, who hit the conversion, 18-14.

Kroll got in on the try-scoring action moments after Doylestown's sin-binned player returned to the pitch. From a midfield scrum, the Lions nearly lost their ball as it was taken weak. Doylestown's defense came up quickly from the breakdown, so Kroll dummied and skirted through, then outraced his pursuers to the corner, 19-18.

But the Village Lions were just as susceptible to overcommitting on defense, and Doylestown's next score evolved after a miscommunication on the tackle. From the subsequent breakdown on the tryline, flanker Dennis Reilly picked weak and over the try line. Weir made an impressive conversion from the sideline, 25-19.

The Village Lions weren't ready to let go of the lead just yet, as a deep kickoff and slow recovery allowed the team to force a penalty in the breakdown. Another penalty from the subsequent scrum saw a quick tap head out to inside center Tim Rossi, who rumbled upfield for another few meters. The backs flowed weak and the ball made its way to fullback Paul Kenline, who dotted down in the corner. Kroll hit a superb sideline conversion for the 26-25 lead.

Both teams had issues with sticking tackles, and for the Lions, Doylestown fullback Kiel Eckhoff was particularly difficult to contain. He accounted for his team's next score when he returned a Kroll kick from deep within his team's end. He slipped through several tackles down the line then through the middle for the centered try and Weir conversion, 32-26.

"Kiel is one of the best in our region," Tomlinson said. "He's so dangerous with ball in hand and can go 100 meters at any time – as long as he doesn't kick away possession, which is something we've talked about."

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With time winding down, the Lions had several opportunities to not only make a comeback, which they did when a series of penalties allowed Kroll to find the try zone again (33-32), but a series of errant lineouts continually handed Doylestown possession.

The penalties continued to be both sides' bane, but it was the final one that awarded Doylestown the opportunity to win. After an in-from-the-side infringement, Doylestown kicked for touch, a lineout that set up Beauregard's dropgoal with three minutes to go, 35-33.

"We were well matched up," Tomlinson said. "We both have dynamic backline, but our forwards were a little tougher today. We needed control in the forwards, and we did that with short, little punches. However, our tackling was suspect and we'll need to work on that for tomorrow."

Doylestown, last year's DII finalist, will face New Orleans in their quarterfinal.