

South Wins Big in Jamaica

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The South played Jamaica in a friendly Saturday in Kingston, Jamaica. Both sides were first-round knockout losers in the NACRA tournament, with Jamaica losing narrowly to Cayman and the South similarly to Mexico. The South, driven by their Mexican experience, challenged Jamaica to play in Jamaica, and they accepted.

The South had four team changes from the Mexico game due to injury and availability. Mathew Hughson and Ty Elkins from Charlotte were drafted into the backs, with Jarret Falcon (New Orleans) and Dave Meehan (Boca Raton) joining the forwards.

Jamaica kicked off and the first blood was drawn by the South in the 10th minute as scrumhalf Anthony Alexander (Little Rock) finished off some great approach work by the forwards. His try was converted by club mate Chance Hugh.

The forwards continued to seek supremacy on both sides and Jamaica showed flashes of brilliance with dangerous break-outs by their talented and fast backs, which asked many questions of the South defense.

In the 20th minute, a concerted drive by the South pack through multiple phases saw flanker Tim Barford of Loughborough University, who had taken over pack leadership while skipper Shawn O'Brien (Johnson City) was off for repairs, drive over from close in. Conversion by Hugh took the score to 14-0.

Jamaica continued to press for cracks in the South defense and were eventually rewarded with a break away try coming from pressure. The conversion attempt failed.

The game ebbed and flowed both ways, before a game-ending injury to hooker Owen Sharer

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(University of South Carolina) saw him replaced by Jarret Falcon of New Orleans, with Barford moving to hooker.

The pack stepped up the pressure on Jamaica creating more and more opportunities for the South backs, who were becoming increasingly penetrative and confident. Then, man of the match Mark Fulmer (Little Rock) delivered two killer blows with two tries in the final two minutes of the first half, with one converted. Half time score: South 26, Jamaica 5

Skipper O'Brien did not return for the second half, and was replaced by Rob Hoffman of New Orleans at 8. The South also brought speedster Ty Elkins (Charlotte) on to add fresh legs to the attack at the start of the second half. These impact changes were immediately effective as the South piled on the pressure.

Jason Forseman was able to wriggle through for a try 14 minutes into the second half as Jamaica were pinned back with some great tactical kicking from No. 10 Jeff Reuther, who continued to put Jamaica on the back foot. This try was again converted to make it 33-5.

Jamaica didn't not lie down, soaking up waves of approach work by the rejuvenated South pack, but the pressure told when Fulmer was able to score his third try of the game through a well worked overlap -- 40-5.

Jamaica made their changes, and their strength in offloads led to some anxious moments as they penetrated the South line only to often lose the ball on turnovers coming from resolute defensive tackling by the South backs.

A counter-attack saw the South go further ahead with an opportunist try ahead by New Orleans sub Rob Hoffman, which went unconverted, making it 45-5.
The South closed the final quarter by tightening the screws. They brought on their subs --

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Abukuppeh of Little Rock and trainer Sean Borman of Boca -- before delivering the final blow with a try from Mathew Hughson of Charlotte, the score again converted by the impeccable boot of Chance, who was 6-for-8 on the day. Final score 52-5.