

## Fairport Wins New York State Title

Written by Paul Hennessy  
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At Niagara University, the Fairport Red Raiders entered the New York State Class A High School championship as the bottom seed in the tournament. On Sunday May 29th the Red Raiders faced the Saratoga Mustangs, the top seed in the Capitol District. The Mustangs were undefeated, having tallied an impressive six wins and no losses while amassing a total of 205 points for and only 10 against for the season.

2011 was a transition season for the Fairport team, having returned only two starters from the 2010 team which placed second in the state last year. The team began to jell late in the season and defeated their last 3 opponents (Pittsford, Syracuse and Orchard Park) by a combined score of 120-0, while barely qualifying for the playoffs.

From the opening kick the Saratoga Mustangs were no match for the determination and rugby knowhow that the Red Raiders displayed. Fairport saddled and broke the Saratoga Mustangs 51-0.

Meanwhile, Kenmore West defeated Kingston 31-11, setting up a rematch of a 34-20 Kenmore win in the final.

Fairport opened the game by kicking off to Kenmore West but gained possession quickly by out-rucking Kenmore and methodically driving the ball deep into its territory. Fairport scored first after Trevor Benson converted a penalty kick from 30 meters to take the 3-0 lead. After strong defense by both teams, Kenmore's winger was able to recover his own kick for an outstanding try and a 5-3 lead. Shortly after, Fairport stole a Kenmore ball and was able to pass out wide to set up Jake Wolf for an explosive run that ended in a try, regaining the lead for Fairport.

The half ended with Fairport knocking on the door once more, but failing to score a try from five meters out. The game was very much a seesaw battle and the determining factor was field position. Kenmore scored another try before Fairport answered with a fantastic team effort, started and later finished by Matt Greco. Trevor Benson made the conversion for a Fairport 15-12 lead. Fairport was then able to break the back-and-forth scoring when Greg Johnson won several Kenmore lineouts that neutralized their kicking game.

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Eventually Benson was able to break free and make a difficult pass to Dan Gueli who rumbled in for the try. Benson then made the conversion kick for a 22-12 Fairport lead.

As the second half began to wind down, Kenmore caught the Red Raiders forwards out of defensive position and scored from the back of a driving maul. The conversion attempt failed.

From that point on, the battles took place primarily at midfield with both teams displaying exceptional rucking, tackling and positional play. With 10 minutes left and Kenmore committing a penalty, Fairport chose to take the long penalty kick from 40 meters out. An outstanding kick by Benson was good, making it 25-17 and a two score lead. Kenmore came back down the field for another unconverted try to make it 25-22 with no time left on the clock.

In Girls competition on Sunday, the NY Rugby Club U19 girls defeated Fairport 27-7 in the semifinals. The NY Rugby Club went on to win the State Title by defeating the Kingston club in the championship game. In the Girl's Consolation match Fairport defeated Adirondack 19-7 in a close game that was tied at 7 at the half. The Fairport Girls team finished 3rd place in the state.