

Colorado Springs Claims Colorado HS Title

Written by Bernie Decker
Friday, 13 May 2011 06:00

Colorado Springs Grizzlies defeated Denver East in the finals of Colorado prep rugby championships 36-3 Wednesday night in cool wet weather at Infinity Park in Glendale. Colorado Springs swarming defense was able to force turnover ball at the breakdown and they thieved critical set piece ball at both lineout and scrum to post the victory over their upstate rivals, avenging a defeat to the Angels at the onset of the season.

The Grizzlies pressured directly after the start, effecting possession transfer thirty meters out from East's goal and mauling in tight short, banging phases to just shy of the Angel's goalline before being pinged for handling at the breakdown three minutes in.

After flyhalf Danny Brugioni cleared their lines, the Angels marched upfield methodically, keeping ball in hand and patiently knocking back the yards in two- and three-yard spurts.

East spent eight minutes inside the Grizzlies 22 their forwards led by #8 Adam Page seeking the crease in the defense until Springs were judged to be offside at the loose and Brugioni made them pay with a well-slotted penalty goal twenty yards out and East up by three 10 minutes in.

The battle was truly joined now with Colorado Springs' forwards making the hard yards before sending the ball to U19 All American flyhalf Michael Black who worked play inside with his centers, keeping his pack in play while East answered with probing darts from the back of the scrum via Page and his backrow compatriots.

Grizzlies got their first dot as lock Kyle Eichelberger snatched ball from a scrum five meters from East goal and dodged a defender to touch down for the first of his triple: conversion by wing Nathan Fletcher and it was 7-3 Springs midpoint in the half. In perhaps the match's most impressive individual effort, Black received a pass at the re-start and broke the line at his own 22 and roared right back upfield, crossing into East territory with a trio of Angels in pursuit before dropping the ball on his toe at East's 10 meter line. Black was able to collect the jouncer twenty yards out and carried play and a would-be tackler into goal to touch down for a Fletcher-converted goal and 14-3 Grizzly lead.

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The Springs were to increase their margin prior to break when Eichelberger plucked ball from the loose five meters out and slipped into goal for the score, and with Fletcher spot-on, a 21-3 Colorado Springs advantage at the break.

Shortly after the re-start Colorado springs rushed into East's 22 and Eichelberger got his third for a 21-3 lead at 34 minutes. Michael Black then brought his side back at East, stepping inside a defender at his own 10 meter line and scooting 50 meters closeby East goaline where his forwards drove into goal and hooker Matt Mechtly collected the grounding.

Springs' picks and barges from the loose and controlled maul work was to keep East on the back foot for most of the half as Eichelberger tried once more and Fletcher split the uprights for a penalty goal. Though East were able to break into the Grizzlies 22 on a number of occasions in the half, staunch and resolute resolve in defense by the Springs denied them a mark and at the final whistle Colorado springs Grizzlies had defended their 2010 prep championship with a 36-3 victory.

Cherry Creek takes Open Division

Cherry Creek RC held a 15-0 halftime advantage over PAC Rugby Club, and powered on with four second stanza tries to place first in the open division with a 37-0 defeat of the Front Range club.

Scoring:

Colorado Springs 36

Tries: Eichelberger (3), Black, Mechtly

Convs: Fletcher (4)

Pens: Fletcher

Denver East 3

Pens: Brugioni

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Referee: T. Luscombe