

SMC Rugby Falls in Tough Fight Against Cal

By Mikaela Cowles



Connor Coyne, supported by Pat Grass Photo provided by SMC Photos

As the University of California at Berkeley men's rugby team charged out to a 26-point lead, it appeared as though Saint Mary's was in for another devastating loss. But despite losing 41-31, the Gaels never laid down.

An early yellow card awarded to Brandon Veddar landed him on the sidelines and Saint Mary's down a player for 10 minutes. Struggling to hold the Bears at bay, Saint Mary's did not lose their composure and began to give Cal a game worth fighting for when they regained Veddar.

Late in the first half, 15 players strong once again, Saint Mary's pushed past the goal line and got themselves on the board. Within two minutes of their first score, Saint Mary's Kevin Swiryn broke away from the pack. Rushing down the field he passed back to Ryan Martens, who threw off gracefully to Austin Mount for another try by Saint Mary's. Cal finished

the first half with a penalty kick by Sean Gallinger, setting the halftime score at 29-12.

The ball exchanged hands frequently in the second half as both teams remained scoreless for the first 17 minutes. Cal's Paul Jesseman got them on the board with his second try of the day, but Saint Mary's answered quickly. Freshman, Chad Clark ran from the 10 meter line weaving in and out of Cal players to keep the Saint Mary's spirit alive.

Cal's Colin Hawley countered with a try, but the Gaels were unrelenting. With Saint Mary's giving them a run for their money, Cal dug into their extensive bench late in the game, substituting Tom Rooke and Steven Fujimoto for Rikus Pretorius and Eric Fry. Despite Cal's fresh bodies, the Gaels broke away from the pack to the five meter line with four minutes left on the clock. With a big push from the forward line, Kyle Batten



Chad Clark scrum half freshman! Photo provided by SMC Photos



Kyle Mickiewicz Photo provided by SMC Photos

scored for Saint Mary's.

Batten's score was too little too late and the Gaels lost 41-31. Cal went on to beat Brigham Young in a 59-7 victory, clinching their

fifth straight Division I National Championship.