

# College Sport

in association with the Massey University Journalism School

## Silverstream, Wellington to contest final

LIAM HYSLOP

The team able to best withstand the pressure of finals rugby will walk away with the win in the 2017 WelTec Premiership final.

Sunday's decider will see defending champions Wellington College take on this season's unbeaten side, St Patrick's College, Silverstream.

Stream thrashed rivals St Patrick's College, Town 41-7 in their semifinal on Saturday, despite having two players yellow carded in the second half.

Their perfect 10-10 premiership season thus far has been a couple of years in the making, with the strength in their junior ranks over the past few seasons finally making it through to the senior division.

For coach Tim Mannix, making the final was the perfect reward for his hard-working squad.

"The game is about the boys. It's their game, their experience, and they've really committed well throughout the season in terms of their training and approach to the game.

"This is a really nice reward for them and to see that hard work, which a lot of them have been putting in for two years in this squad, get them into the final."

Stream should just about have a full squad at their disposal for Sunday's final at Jerry Collins Stadium in Porirua after a few players missed the semifinal due to illness or injury.



St Patrick's College, Silverstream, left, will take on Wellington College in the WelTec Premiership final after both celebrated big semifinal wins last weekend.

Stream beat Wellington 26-3 in their previous encounter this season on June 7, but Mannix was expecting a much tighter match in the final.

"They're a tough team. They've perhaps had a few games where they haven't performed where they would have liked to, but they're a team that gets better over the season because they have a real tough list of fixtures and traditionals. They're a pretty battle-hardened group.

"We got a look at how they play

earlier in the year. They have a quality set piece game, and we expect they, like most teams, will try to get a bit of field position and build pressure from there.

"Both teams will probably go about that in slightly different ways, but I think both teams will be looking to apply that formula."

Wellington produced an impressive performance to beat Scots College 27-14 in last Saturday's other semifinal. Scots came into that match with only one loss, to Stream, this season,

but found it hard to break down Wellington's defence.

Their two tries came from an intercept and a quick tap, which Wellington coach Lincoln Rawles was especially happy about.

"There weren't a lot of line breaks converted into tries or anything like that. We did really well in that area and managed to break them quite a few times to score our tries."

Another strong defensive showing would be needed against Stream, who have scored 589



PHOTOS: JOE SERCI AND MASANORI UDAGAWA

points in their 10 WelTec Premiership matches, compared to Wellington's 326.

"It's that consistency throughout the game and to be able to go through the pain barrier and keep making those tackles," Rawles said.

"There were certainly a number of key points in that game [semifinal] where desperation, scramble defence held the line together to stop them from getting back into the game."

Stream also have the best

defensive record, conceding just 55 points this season, although Wellington are second with 111.

What Wellington have on their side is big-game experience, with a number of their title-winning players from last season continuing in leadership roles.

Rawles said Sunday's match would come down to who was able to deal with the high-pressure final environment the best.

"There is a huge amount of pressure on all teams in the final.

"There's definitely a danger for

### At a glance

**What:** WelTec Premiership final

**Who:** St Pat's Silverstream v Wellington College

**Where and when:** Jerry Collins Stadium, Porirua, 2.45pm Sunday

#### Semifinal results:

■ St Pat's Silverstream 41 (Kienan De la Rambelje 2, Iona Apineru, Teagan Harawira, Toalima Anae-Laupola, Chris Aumua, Albert Polu tries; Harrison Boyle 3 con) St Pat's Town 7 (Herman Seumanufagai try; Ricki Manu Laiatea con). HT: 19-0.

■ Wellington College 27 (Thomas Bramley 2, Naitoa Ah Koi tries; Josh Morgan-Ranui pen, 2 con, Taine Plumtree pen) Scots College 14 (Jack Gray, Jack Mexted tries; Malo Manuao 2 con) HT: 10-7.

teams getting there and thinking what they've done throughout the season means anything, because it doesn't. It's all about how the teams are performing at the end that is going to count the most."

Mannix said their approach wouldn't change too much in the final.

"The big thing that our guys have referenced all year is to enjoy themselves and to play how we want to play and be consistent about that.

"I know the environment will be a bit different, with a big crowd and TV cameras, but I think the big thing is to just follow the process and execute our skills in that environment."

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