

The UAP Rhinos rewrite history with third straight BRSS Title

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Edwin Makori's try in sudden death saw the UAP Rhinos retain the Bamburi Rugby Super Series title with a 20-15 win over a battling SDV Transami Cheetahs in a scintillating final played at the RFUEA Grounds on Saturday 4th June 2011.

Vincent Mose kicked the Cheetahs into an early 6-0 lead with two penalties before the Rhinos finally found their rhythm, pitching camp in their opponents 25. Naftali Bondo was played in by Isaac Adimo only to be stopped agonizingly short of the try line. Their pressure finally bore fruit when Allan Omuka, celebrating his birthday, went over for the first of his two tries. Adimo missed this conversion with the match finely poised, 6-5 to the Cheetahs. Another Mose penalty saw the Cheetahs, winners in 2004 and 2006, take a 9-5 lead into the interval.

The second half would remain a carbon copy of the first, a close encounter, neither side really getting a foothold on the day's proceedings. Mose's fourth penalty saw the Cheetahs extend their lead to 12-5 and this seemed to set the tone for a frenetic end to the match, both sides realizing what was at stake.

The Rhinos managed to retain their composure and discipline in the rucks and maul while the Cheetahs kept knocking at their opponents door, seeking to make the game safe. Such was the intensity of the match that Nick Lang'o had to stretchered off after colliding with the Cheetahs John Ahenda. An unconverted try from Omuka reduced the deficit to 12-10 before scrum half Edwin Achayo gave the Rhinos the lead for the first time in this match, Adimo missing the conversion with the scores at 15-12.

Nato Simiyu's forty yard break with two minutes of regulation play left saw the Cheetahs attack and win a penalty off a Rhino's infringement that saw Wilson Kopondo sent to the sin bin.. Mose stepped up to send his kick

between the sticks, tying the game at 15-15 with the buzzer going off, signalling the end of regulation time.

The tension in the air was palpable heading into extra. It was going to take something special to clinch this tie and Makori served it up, grounding the ball to hand Rhinos a third successive BRSS title, which raises their tally of titles to five.

This was a historic final for a number of reasons, the first final to be decided in sudden death extra, the lowest scoring final in BRSS history and the final that saw a team win three straight titles. All in all, it was a good indictment for Kenyan rugby.

Vincent Mose, whose fifteen points in the final saw him finish one point behind Adimo in the points scorers chart was voted man of the match while Nick Lang'o claimed the man of the series award.

Rwenzori finish third

Uganda's Rwenzori finished third, beating the Nguvu Sharks 26-19 in an equally entertaining play off match. Converted tries from Justine Kimono and Paul Kabazi saw the Ugandans lead 14-7 at half time.

Two more tries from Hector Gutaka and Andrew Olweny saw them rally after trailing 14-19 to run off with the 26-19 result.

Sharks try scorers were Bryan Okwomi, Edwin Salamba and Hastings Nyariki. Felix Wanjala and Kenny Andola managed one conversion each.

It was double joy for the Ugandans as Justine Kimono emerged the top try scorer after landing five tries, fending off the Cheetahs Ian Indimuli and the Rhinos duo of Allan Omuka and Isaac Adimo who finished on four tries.

BRSS Final Day

Final

UAP Rhinos 20 SDV Transami Cheetahs 15

3rd Place Playoff

Rwenzori 26 Nguvu Sharks 19

Man of the Series

Nick Lang'o UAP Rhinos

Top Points Scorer

Isaac Adimo UAP Rhinos 43 points

Top Try Scorer

Justine Kimono Rwenzori 5 tries