

The end of the 2018 North Harbour senior club rugby season is nigh with semi-finals upon us next Saturday 14 July for the Premier and Under 21 grades. Premier 1 and Premier 2 finished their round and a half 30 June and went into the play-offs 7 July to confirm the finishing order for the semi-finals. The top two sides in both grades had earned the bye and the remaining eight teams battled for a Championship or Plate semi-final position.

In the Premier One grade there was no change to the finishing order with results going as would be expected in the 7 July play-offs. Top dogs Northcote and Massey sat out the bye watching with interest. East Coast Bays in a return to early season form put away Kumeu 39-3 to consign the Westies to the Plate division, North Shore on the charge into the championship group thumped the old foe Takapuna 37-16 at Devonport to confirm the blue and golds in the Plate semi's. Silverdale were too good for neighbours Mahurangi with a 37-19 win but a good outing from Mahurangi's back three was had, and Marist just edged Glenfield 31-29 in Albany to stay in position for the Plate semi's. The 14 July draw will see 2017 Champion Northcote host North Shore who are in rising form and mercurial Massey returning from the bye to play East Coast Bays at home for the Championship semi-finals. In the Plate division semi's, Takapuna will play host to the young Marist crew who beat them at Onewa a couple of weeks back and Kumeu will host country cousins Silverdale whom they thumped to take the Country Cup in early May but it is a resurgent 'Dale looking for a scalp at Riverhead and a shot at the Plate silverware and challenge for the Country Cup. The Bowl final will be contested by Glenfield and Mahurangi in a repeat of 2017.

In the Premier Two grade there were three results in the 7 July play-offs that changed the 30 June finishing order. East Coast Bays and North Shore, only separated by three bonus points had the well earned bye. Northcote thrashed Marist 92-3 in a romp at Harvey's place and Massey eased Kumeu out of the Championship semi-finals winning 18-3 at Riverhead. Silverdale climbed the ladder from the bottom rung with a solid 36-21 win over Glenfield to secure bottom ranking for the Plate semi's and Navy struggling all season with the high operational tempo of our fleet, mustered enough willing jack tars to just edge Takapuna 29-24 to sail into Plate final contention. For 14 July Premier Two semi-finals, East Coast Bays host Massey at Windsor park and North Shore will host last years Champion Northcote in the Championship division. The Plate semi-finals will have Kumeu contest for a place in the Plate final against Silverdale in Riverhead and Marist will host Navy at the Vatican. Glenfield and Takapuna will play for the Bowl trophy.

The Under 21's played their last round of games of the second round on 7 July to confirm rankings for the 14 July semi-finals. The top three ended either on 56 or 55 points and fourth and fifth placed teams were tied on 41 points with Massey securing bottom ranking of the Championship group courtesy of their close second round win over Takapuna in early June. East Coast Bays beat top dog Marist comfortably with an interesting 27-5 win and the big Northcote side were too good for Silverdale winning 48-0. Massey thumped the struggling but gallant Kumeu side 75-0 and Takapuna held off North Shore with a 33-25 win. The 14 July Championship semi-finals have Marist hosting Massey and East Coast Bays at home to Northcote for two mouth-watering fixtures. The Plate group will see Takapuna welcoming Kumeu to Onewa Domain and Silverdale playing North Shore at 'Dale Park.

The Under 85 grade continued their second round on 7 July with four fixtures remaining, with semi's and finals on 11 and 18 August respectively. Silverdale has been out in front for sometime but

Takapuna has closed up to second place with a win over third placed Massey on 7 July whilst Dale was on the bye securing some crayfish as Coasties do. The old boys at Kumeu have started their run at the big dance and are within striking distance in fourth place however Mahurangi pipped them in Warkworth this weekend. North Shore is fifth and not far behind Kumeu but got tipped up by Northcote on Saturday, who is leading the pack in the bottom group with East Coast Bays and Mahurangi in close pursuit and Helensville bringing up the rear.

East Coast Bays Women are in the top four of the Wider Auckland Womens Premier grade and Glenfield women are in the bottom four with two fixtures remaining in the second round of games. Semi-finals will be held 28 July with Finals on 4 August.

The Presidents grade are enjoying their games in those well-played draws and the banter in those lengthy but interesting after-match speeches as they trek towards their finals day at Riverhead on 18 August. It is the first time this century that Kumeu has hosted the much anticipated Pressie's finals day and they will be showing off their newly upgraded pitches now at full noise and hosting a great end-of-season party on that fabulous deck not to mention the flash new toilet facilities styled by the Hilton's hotel group architect.

