



John I Dent Cup Preview: Round 1



Saturday, 6th April, 2013

Kick-off times:

First Grade: 3.05pm, Reserve Grade: 1.40pm, Colts: 12.15pm

Match of the Round:

Royals v Gungahlin, Phillip Oval, Phillip

A highly anticipated 2013 John I Dent Cup season gets underway this weekend with just the two games taking place, Royals vs. Gungahlin and Uni-North vs. Easts. The Brumbies contracted players feature in the competition for the second year after a very successfully 1st year implementation, continuing to grow the standard of the competition. Round 1 sees the clash of two of the competition heavy weights, Royals and Gungahlin at Phillip.

Royals have seen some major changes occur over the off season with the appointment of Russell Ingram as 1st grade Coach. After missing out on the finals last year, Royals will be concentrating on making a top 4 spot this year. Playing at home this weekend Royals will be looking to start their season off with a bang and recent pre season trial form suggests that Royals are heading in the right direction to achieving their goal. This Saturday there will be a number of new players running out for Royals most notably new recruits Jordan Rapana, Tom Staniforth and Perdo Rolando who have been featuring heavily with the Brumbies academy. Robbie Abel returns to the club after playing abroad in New Zealand to strengthen an already impressive and big forward pack while Craig McMahon will again lead the side this season at flyhalf.

Gungahlin will be another side looking to go a step further after what was a promising 2012. A strong regular season saw the Eagles finish in third place being the only team to beat eventual premiers Tuggeranong. They eventually went down in disappointing fashion on the bell again Queanbeyan in the Minor Semi Final. Over the pre season the Eagles have had eight 1st grade players feature in the Brumbies Academy program which will bring the team a great deal of confidence and experience.

This weekend Gungahlin will field a very impressive forward pack which will feature Brumbies contracted player 'Ruaidhri Murphy and Josh Manna Rea'. Their back row will be very strong with Xavier Duffy, Rutikha Ilohahia and new recruit Marc Bertelot who was previously a part of the Brumbies Academy program.

Uni-Norths v Easts, ANU North Oval, Turner

With both clubs rebuilding and two new head coaches taking on their respective roles; this match is shaping up as being a very hard fought encounter for both teams.

Uni-Norths and Head Coach Joe Hedger have been working strongly in the pre season to prepare the club for the 2013 season. With a blend of new and experienced players the Owls will be setting a very high standard for themselves and will be pushing to make the top 4 at the end of the year after missing out on the finals by only 6 points last year. Three players will make their debut for the Owls this weekend Japanese front rowers Kabuki Takayuki and Ogiwara Kaname and fullback Jackson Te Huki. Uni-Norths also welcome back second rower Joe Ritchie from his studies overseas and winger Corey Hammond. Number 8 Bhiemie Williamson will again lead the team this year.

Easts after a disappointing 2012 season have been very active in their recruitment and have set the standards very high in wanting to play finals football. Coach Jeremy Osborne has put a strong emphasis on improving Easts defence this year and general play around the park and this is evident in the players recruited. Brother's Fabian and Leti Tago will partner each other in the centres and Ryne Bowden will play at scrum half. Easts will be boosted by the inclusion of 3 of their Brumbies contracted players, prop Ruan Smith, flanker Jordan Smiler and winger Stephan Van Der Walt.