



# John I Dent Cup Preview: Grand Final



**Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> September - Viking Park, Erindale**

*Kick-off times: First Grade: 3.15pm, Reserve Grade: 1.20pm, Colts: 11:40am*

## **Grand Final: Tuggeranong v Royals**

*Major Semi Final: Tuggeranong 14 defeated Royals 13 at Viking Park*

After nineteen rounds and two weeks of intense finals football, two sides remain standing with the opportunity to become Champions for 2013. Minor Premiers Tuggeranong and Royals will square off for the right to hold aloft the John I Dent Cup later this afternoon.

There is a lot of hype surrounding today's match up with Tuggeranong looking to secure their third consecutive title, while Royals will be contesting their first 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Grand Final in 11 years and looking to end a 22 year 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Premiership drought. This season these two standout teams have met on three occasions with Vikings getting the better of Royals in two of these matches. Of the three encounters the biggest winning margin was 4 points in Round 10 when Vikings won 17-14. So we can expect today's match to be another close encounter.

Tuggeranong again had other dominating year, taking out the minor premiership after losing just two games to Royals and Queanbeyan. However this season, has seen a lot of team vastly improve and impose a threat on Vikings dominant reign over the John I Dent Cup. Having won through to the Grand Final for the 5<sup>th</sup> consecutive year, after defeating Royals in the Major Semi Final, Brad Harris' team have been able to freshen up and prepare for the chance to win three premierships in a row. Tuggeranong previously achieved such a feat with the premiership in 97', 98' & 99'. Coincidentally, Royals were at the receiving end to all three of those premierships in the late 90's.

The Royals road to today's Grand Final has been one of very hard fought and close encounters. A 1 point loss in the Major Semi Final, followed by a gutsy 3 point win in the Preliminary over Queanbeyan, Royals have put on a very thrilling final series for all supporters. Last weekend's performance, while gusty, was also impressive as Royals were without three key players, Tom Cusack, Jack Sutton & Jay Cash. Liam Davis, Reece Coble and Anthony Chan, who stepped in for those players all played critical rolls which helped get Royals over the line. Royals will take a lot of confidence out of the 33-30 victory, considering Queanbeyan were at full strength and has plenty off attacking threats across the park. For those who weren't present at the Preliminary Final, the lead changed on 4 occasions producing a very exciting finish. Queanbeyan went into half time with a 15-13 lead before Royals jumped out in front 26-18 with 20 minutes remaining, but Queanbeyan would hit back trailing 26-25 with 10 left, leaving a grand stand finish open. Royals with 5 minutes left, were able to build pressure which lead to Seth Going scoring his second try to take the score to 33-25, but in true Queanbeyan style, the hit back with 3 minutes left on the clock to take the score to 33-30, to which it would remain.

Tuggeranong have named an unchanged side from the Major Semi Final and will be lead from the front by Captain and MacDougal Medallist Tim Cree. Tim is one of 11 starting players who took part in last year's Grand Final, so their experience will be crucial throughout the match especially when the game is in the balance. Vikings will be calling on Brumbies players Colby Faingaa and Zach Holmes to stamp authority on the game in both attack and defence. Royals on the other hand, will welcome back Jay Cash into the run on side who will add some fire power and size up front to an already dominant pack which has Siliva Siliva, 2 times MacDougall Medallist Soakai Tai and Tom Staniforth. Lead by Fly Half Craig McMahon, Royals will be looking for his leadership skills, goal kicking and organisation to deliver Royals the 2013 Premiership.

This game will have it all, both teams' forward packs love the physicality and contest at the break down, while their backlines both have speed and power and exciting finishers. The crowd will be amazed at the quality of rugby that will be played today and with both coaches Brad Harris & Russell Ingram getting their first crack at First Grade Premiership glory, it is exciting times all-round.