

Match Report – July 26

PNRL Shield - Round 2, Game 1 - Pacific Kumuls v Gorillas RFC

Date: 07/26/2026

Final score: Pacific Kumuls 32 defeated Gorillas RFC 10.

Match Overview

The Kumuls entered this fixture carrying momentum from a Round 1 victory, bringing confidence, continuity, and early-season belief into the contest. The Gorillas, by contrast, arrived still searching for their first win of the season, making this match an important opportunity to reset their campaign and prove they could match one of the competition's early pace-setters.

The match carried a clear contrast in pressure: the Kumuls were looking to build on a strong opening-round performance, while the Gorillas needed a response that showed discipline, improved execution, and greater resilience across both halves. That context shaped the intensity from the opening exchanges, with both sides aware of the importance of gaining early control.

The Pacific Kumuls went on to claim a 32–10 victory, leading 26–6 at half-time before closing out the match with a controlled second-half performance.

Playing Conditions and Venue

The playing conditions at the venue had a noticeable influence on the rhythm of the match. The surface appeared to demand controlled footwork and strong ball security, especially through contact and during yardage sets. Both teams had to balance ambition with patience, as any lapse in handling or defensive spacing had the potential to shift momentum quickly.

The conditions placed a premium on completion rates, kicking discipline, and field position. In this setting, the team that managed possession better and limited unnecessary errors was always likely to gain the upper hand. As the game progressed, fatigue and pressure made those fundamentals even more important, particularly late in each half.

First-Half Analysis

The first half opened with strong physicality through the middle, as both forward packs looked to establish dominance and earn territory. The Kumuls appeared more settled in

the early exchanges, reflecting the confidence of a team coming off a Round 1 win. Their carries were direct, their defensive line held shape well, and they showed patience in building pressure rather than forcing low-percentage opportunities.

The Gorillas showed urgency and intent, knowing a positive start was vital in their search for a first win of the season. Their best moments came when they played with tempo, moved the ball into space, and challenged the Kumuls' defensive edges. However, any early promise needed to be matched by consistency, particularly in completing sets and turning pressure into points.

A key feature of the opening half was the battle for field position. The Kumuls' control through their kick chase and defensive line speed helped them keep the Gorillas under pressure. The Gorillas, meanwhile, had to work hard out of their own end and needed clean exits to avoid giving the Kumuls repeat opportunities close to the try line.

On the scoreboard, the Kumuls were rewarded for their first-half control through tries to Lloyd Apena, who crossed twice, along with one try each to Wille Agua, Andrew Kei, and Nimrod Shio. Andrew Kei's goal-kicking helped convert that attacking pressure into a commanding advantage. The Gorillas' first-half response came through Evans Atandi, with Harvey Morris converting to keep them within reach at the break. By half-time, the Kumuls held a 26–6 lead.

Second-Half Analysis

The second half demanded composure from both teams. For the Kumuls, the challenge was to maintain the standards that had brought them success in Round 1: disciplined sets, strong contact, and smart decision-making at the end of attacking movements. Their ability to stay composed under pressure was central to their performance as the match entered its more decisive stages.

The Gorillas' second-half task was clear: they needed to lift their energy, reduce errors, and find ways to convert territory into scoreboard pressure. Their push for a first win of the season gave their performance a sense of urgency, and they looked most threatening when they played with support through the middle and quick service to the edges.

As the half wore on, the match became increasingly shaped by fatigue and game management. Defensive reads, kick pressure, and discipline around the ruck became decisive. The Kumuls' Round 1 confidence gave them a platform to manage key moments, while the Gorillas had to chase momentum without losing structure.

The second half saw the Gorillas continue to fight for momentum, with Harvey Morris scoring a try and converting to add to their tally. However, the Kumuls maintained control, with Alvi David crossing for a second-half try and Andrew Kei finishing with four

successful conversions overall. The Kumuls' ability to keep adding pressure after the break ensured they protected their lead and sealed the 32–10 result.

Match Highlights

- The Pacific Kumuls defeated the Gorillas 32–10 after leading 20–6 at half-time.
- Lloyd Apena was a major first-half threat for the Kumuls, scoring two tries.
- Wille Agua, Andrew Kei, and Nimrod Shio each scored first-half tries for the Kumuls.
- Alvi David added a second-half try as the Kumuls closed out the match.
- Andrew Kei converted four goals, adding valuable points to the Kumuls' attacking efforts.
- Evans Atandi scored the Gorillas' first-half try, with Harvey Morris converting.
- Harvey Morris scored and converted the Gorillas' second-half try.
- The Kumuls built on their Round 1 win, while the Gorillas continued their search for a first victory of the season.

Key Tactical Themes

Field position: Both sides needed to earn territory through disciplined carries and well-placed kicks. The team that controlled where sets began was better positioned to apply sustained pressure.

Completion rates: The venue conditions made ball security a major factor. Dropped possession or poor set endings were costly because they invited pressure and limited attacking rhythm.

Momentum management: The Kumuls' winning start to the season gave them confidence in tight passages, while the Gorillas had to manage the emotional pressure of chasing their first victory.

Conclusion

This fixture brought together two teams at different points in their early-season journey. The Pacific Kumuls reinforced the momentum gained from their Round 1 win with a 32–10 victory, while the Gorillas showed effort and moments of quality but remained in search of their first win of the season. The Kumuls' strong first-half scoring burst, led by Lloyd Apena's double and supported by Andrew Kei's goal-kicking, gave them the platform to control the match.

The Gorillas had scoring contributions from Evans Atandi and Harvey Morris, with Morris also converting both tries, but the Kumuls' attacking spread and stronger control across

the two halves proved decisive. The result leaves the Kumuls well placed after back-to-back positive performances, while the Gorillas will look to build on their scoring moments as they continue pushing for their first win.

TEAM LIST-

Gorillas RFC

- 1 Harvey Morris
- 2 Lucca Borromeo
- 8 Evans Atandi
- 3 Maxi Ignacio
- 4 Arwin Capparos
- 5 Mahmoud Hajij
- 6 JP Vega
- 7 Eubie Lebumfacil
- 9 Dwayne Buensalida
- 10 Jay Rhoy Esperanza
- 11 Charles Ong
- 12 Lani Cadiz
- 13 Gino Zamora
- 14 Luke Curry
- 15 Miguel Veliz
- 16 Zohair Jamal
- 17 Benjamin Teine
- 18 Yoba Tultul
- 19 Elliot Lulule
- 20 Aho Luhuvae
- 21 Rhodrick Koimo
- 22 Justine Yukil

Pacific Kumuls

- 1 Peter Daroa
- 2 Lloyd Apena
- 3 Jared Luso
- 4 Nukeith Sapa
- 5 Willie Agua
- 6 Andrew Kei
- 7 Ian James
- 8 Richardo Mando
- 9 Izrial Sipori
- 10 Nimrod Shio
- 11 Ryan Peimo
- 12 Norman Huviang
- 13 Clive Nangen
- 14 Cain Tamu
- 15 Benson Wimbi
- 16 Jonah Tunsio
- 17 Zemmin Minata
- 18 Lucas Warui
- 19 David Suali
- 20 Gurzhner Sawa
- 21 Allen Kasam
- 22 Ovia Jerry
- 23 Samson Peter
- 24 Alvin David