

PRESS RELEASE

Manila Storm 2024 Champions PNRL Rugby League Grand Final

Manila, September 22, 2024. The Manila Storm secured their consecutive PNRL Shield Championship by triumphing over Gorillas Rugby with a score of 48-24 in the very wet and tough Manila conditions at the Philippine Sports Commission's PhilSport Complex Ultra.

The match began with the Gorillas taking an early lead as Neil Pickford crossed the try line in the first half. The game was fiercely contested, with possession frequently switching sides. Romario Capule, leader of the Storm, quickly equalised with a powerful try, setting the stage for an intense contest.

The Gorillas maintained heavy pressure, demonstrating strategic attacking plays that challenged the Storm. Ethan Ignacio scored his team's second try, keeping the scores close and competitive.

The Storm's defence was formidable, with notable contributions from Joshua Pilic, Sean Masip, Arwin Caparros, and Ian Pausanos. Vice-captain JR Ramirez played a significant role, orchestrating plays and directing the team efficiently. Juliann Feleo, playing as hooker, was crucial for initiating plays from dummy half thanks to his quick thinking and effective distribution, which helped control the game's tempo.

Just before halftime, Alfred Bangsal capitalised on excellent lead-up work. Larcel Caparros made key metres close to the try line, and Bangsal seized the moment by scoring from the dummy half, giving the Storm a two-try lead going into the break.

Throughout the match, John Denmer Tulabot was relentless in gaining valuable metres, which was essential for field position and maintaining momentum. His robust charges continually pressured the Gorillas, creating numerous opportunities for his teammates.

The Gorillas' perseverance paid off in the second half with two additional tries from Victor Besnoux and Xiaobo Zhang. However, the Storm's defence, guided by JR Ramirez's leadership, held firm and prevented further scores. The highlight of the game was Lito Ramirez's exceptional pace and footwork, slicing through the Gorillas' defence from near the 50m line to score the final try and seal the 48-24 victory.

Despite this loss, the inclusion of the Gorillas Rugby team in the grand final marks a significant milestone for the club and its promising young players. We look forward to witnessing the development of the Makati-based team and their dedication to player growth.

The PNRL Player of the Season award known as the “Erick Estepa Elefante Cup” (*one of the original founders of the Philippine national Rugby League*) was awarded to Manila Storm player Arwin Caparros who was consistent across the whole season scoring 24 points, he also played in every game for the Storm throughout the season.

Team List and Try Scorers:

No.	Manila Storm Player	1st half	2nd half
1	Arwin Caparros		
2	Dane Calderon		
3	Jan Puig		
4	JR Ramirez		
5	John Cleo Alcera		
6	Larcel Caparros (CC)		
7	Alex Morillo		
8	Ian Pausanos		
9	Juliann Feleo (CC)		1
10	Jeremy Hernandez		
11	John Bernard Agunod		
12	Sean Masip		
13	Madriano Pilic		
14	Chicco Ricamora		
15	Jayson Payos		
16	Sidny Librado		
17	Jordan Abanico		
18	Ivon Gavieres		
19	Paul Gilbert Castillo		
20	James Osias	1	
21	Romario Capule	1	1
22	Joshua Pilic	1	
23	Lito Ramirez		1
24	Alfred Bangsal	1	
25	Carl Magtanong		1

No.	Gorillas Player	1st half	2nd half
1	Igino Zamora		
2	Charles Ong		
3	Peter Cochrane		
4	Neil Pickford	1	
5	Seth Powell		
6	Otto Devantier (C)		
7	Victor Besnoux		1
8	Miguel Velis		
9	Lorenzo Garcia		
10	Marc Smoliner		
11	Ethan Ignacio	1	
12	Manuel Olondriz		
13	Xiaobo Zhang		1
14	Tatsu Kubo		
15	Marcus Pedersen		
16	Cian Ferb		
17	George Devantier		
18	Sejun Sihm		
19	Noah Marzouki		
20	Anthony Perez		
21	Tai Miller		
22	Mateo Marzouki		
23	Jihon Nam		

About the PNRL

Pambansang Ragbi Liga NG Pilipinas (PNRL) is the governing body of Rugby League Football in the Philippines. Its mission is to enable all Filipinos to have a healthy lifestyle through their participation in Rugby League Football and to be competitive amongst the Asian Rugby League playing nations. The PNRL focus is the promotion, development, and efficient administration of Rugby League in the Philippines. The PNRL is non-profit volunteer organization, who are a member of the Philippine Olympic Committee and the Philippine Sports Commission. The Philippines is a member of the Asia-Pacific Rugby League Confederation (APRLC) and an observer member of the International Rugby League (IRL).

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