

# TEACHERS DO IT THE HARD WAY

Teachers' College proved the 1978 Illawarra rugby union premiership was wide open to challenges after storming home in the second half to defeat Shoalhaven 22-18 on Saturday.

Down 18-4 at half-time on their home ground, Teachers College relished the wind at their backs to pile on four second half tries and hold the Shoals scoreless.

Teachers College captain Rob O'Connor was the outstanding player in the game.

Playing in the centres rather than his usual wing position, O'Connor scored two tries himself and had a hand in most of the others.

He was the key link in the Teachers College backline which turned in its slickest performance this season.

Shoalhaven, their own backline in tatters with players in positions foreign to them, had no answer.

Shoalhaven dominated possession from set play and O'Connor and his backline cohorts had to feed on crumbs from the first phase.

Had possession even been halved, Teachers College may well have scored another five tries.

The win was important to Teachers College's semi-final aspirations. It puts them ahead of Kiama in fourth place.

In other weekend games Vikings

defeated Camden 50-0 at Vikings Rugby Field, Shamrocks beat Weerona 17-3 at Wiseman Park, Waratahs scored an upset 12-0 win against Bowral at Bowral Rugby Field and Port Kembla was too strong for Technical College at King George V Oval, taking the match 17-3.

Vikings, the defending premiers, lead the competition with 26 points. Shamrocks are second on 23 and Shoalhaven and Teachers College are now equal third on 20 points.

Kiama is now fifth on 19, ahead of Bowral on 15, Weerona 12, Waratahs 10, Technical College 8, Port Kembla 5 and Camden 2.

Alan Calcraft put first points on the board for Shoalhaven in the Teachers College Oval match with a penalty goal in the third minute.

Teachers hit back with a fine bustling try to prop Roy Dunworth to make it 4-3.

The lead was to be short-lived. Just two minutes later Shoals' full-back Garry Osmond burst into the backline, virtually took the ball out of the hands of five eighth Bob McIntosh and crossed for the try.

Calcraft converted to make it 9-4 and landed a penalty goal to push it to 12-4 after 25 minutes.

With about five minutes to go before half-time Calcraft lined up another penalty goal but it hit the posts. McIntosh swooped on it to post another try. Calcraft converted

and it was 18-4 at half-time.

The first blow to Shoalhaven in the second half was the loss of line-out man Earl Kingi. Kingi took a knock in the opening minute of the match and had to leave the field after about four minutes of the second half.

Winger Rick Talby opened Teachers' second half account with a try made easy by Mike Crowley's weak defence.

Seven minutes later centre Paul Cotterill was in and Jim Colvin's conversion made it 18-14.

The first of O'Connor's tries levelled the scores and utility player Peter Smith failed with a pressure conversion attempt from wide out which would have given Teachers the lead.

But O'Connor sealed the issue with his second try about 10 minutes later and with 12 minutes to go. He broke straight through the defence breaking at least two tackles on his way to the line.

Two tactical errors by Shoals' captain-coach Neil Lord made it easier for Teachers to maintain their lead in the closing stages of the game.

Twice they received penalties about 40 yards out — and Lord opted for goal attempts both times.

There was little chance of the kicks being successful into the stiff wind and even if they were, would only have made the score 22-24.