

**New Plymouth Boys' High School** retained the McDonald Shield with a 32-31 victory over **St Patrick's College, Silverstream** in their 89<sup>th</sup> traditional.



Tony Solomona scores a well executed try

Silverstream centre Riley Higgins had the chance to win the game on fulltime with a conversion attempt about 10 metres in from touch and 30 metres out. Cruelly he pushed the ball wide to the left of the uprights as New Plymouth, who never trailed, hung on for a deserved victory.

New Plymouth burst out the gates like a freight train to lead 19-0. Fullback Matua Robinson finished a thrilling break and chip by wing Samuweia Vakaindula to open the scoring and then the visitors employed their greater size and lineout drive to power ahead further. Locks Jacob Mitchell and Rowan Slater (son of All Black Gordon Slater) were very good. Second-Five Levi Rewiti scored a try and looked assured.

Higgins was the single biggest reason Silverstream rallied. He scored a try after New Plymouth incurred the wrath of the referee and from the next kickoff made a 50-metre break, chipping for halfback Tjay Clarke to run down. The halftime score was 19-14.

New Plymouth first-five Jack Parker kicked a penalty to make it 22-14 before a robust by Silverstream made it 22-19. New Plymouth appeared home and hoisted at 32-19, but the departure of Parker and a rapid demise in scrum strength saw Silverstream

rally again. Higgins was a constant threat and the energy of lock Toby Crosby and No.8 Peter Laki was palpable.

It was a bust by reserve flanker Patrick Solomona that put Silverstream first-five Luke Walmsley over for the try that could have won it.

New Plymouth has won 55 of the 89 games against Silverstream.

By Adam Julian