

Scanlan Cup Match Report - 18th April 2026

Past:

Rauri Hadlington (c)
George Tsolakides
Elias Brown
Paul Oregi
Liam Bryant
Oli Laird
Jamie Dunbar
Rhys Davies
Tommy Knight
Ed Shepherd
George Child
Tom George
Lucas Tsolakides
Toby Davis
Peter Hammond
Charles Espivent

Present:

Henry Chamberlain (c)
Caleb Adamu (vc)
Declan Staines
Freddie Clarke
Krishiv Sekhiri
Scoop Wight
Robert Emslie
Thomas Emery
Kieran Burgess
Darren Lee
Oli Vij
Zain Arif
GSAT Hodges
Avy Rai
Donny Donelan
Anmol Singh
Freddie Spencer
Pietro Wood
Theo West
Alex O'Hara
Sami Lewis
Kai Chilvers

As is tradition in this great club, our annual celebratory ball, this year held at the Royal Horseguards Hotel, was preceded by a rugby match between the ruthless Past team and our Present players. The Scanlan Cup represents an opportunity for GHRFC as a whole to come together and honour the life and memory of Paul Scanlan who dedicated himself to the club and who is missed and remembered fondly by so many.

The clash of old and new is always a fun one (though seemingly much more so for the Penguins who readily take the opportunity to show the Present players how it should be done). The fast feet and nimble youth are often given a lesson in hubris and so it was on this sunny Sunday in April.

The game began at a frenetic pace, with both teams crossing over the try line in the opening minutes. The Past side used their abrasive carrying dominance from the likes of Tom George and Liam Bryant to go over for an opening converted score, soon followed by a trademark Caleb Adamu line break, a pass inside to Tom Emery getting around Peter Hammond's covering defence. 7-5 to the Penguins.

The pace of play did not let up, and, for a moment the Present players thought they might be on for a historic dominant win as Emery and Adamu again linked up through an impressive back of the hand offload to put another 5 on the board (Emery missing the first and last conversion of his career). The young guns would not lead for long, however, with captain Rauri taking charge to reclaim a narrow lead. 12-10.

Now the floodgates seemed to open, the Penguins running in a succession of well worked tries. A lovely step from Bilal around the otherwise defensively mighty Fresher Thomas Hodges brought the first of a flurry of scores. Liquid rugby from the gods gave Toby Davis a finish under the posts after some silky handling from the Penguins backline. The Present students began to capitulate, Sami Lewis for a moment forgetting he hadn't yet graduated and throwing an offload of the deck to his flatmate and opposite number Liam Bryant who had a free run under the posts. The Penguins' territorial dominance came to the fore at the end of the half, thanks in no small part to Rhys Davis and his arial supremacy at the lineout. Off the top of a lineout attacking in the 22, the Penguins shipped the ball wide through Jamie Dunbar's practiced hands finding Charles Espivent on the wing who made no mistake in his finish. A bruising half for the Present team ended 36-10.

With what looked like an insurmountable scoreline developing, the Present team would need a miracle in the second half and my goodness did they get one! The fast feet of Kai Chilvers and Oli Vij began to take a hold on the game, line breaks appearing from anywhere and everywhere. The Penguins secured

one more try, before an enormous shot from Freddie Spencer turned the tide of the game. Soon, the Penguins lead had shrunk to a worrying 1 score game by way of the gritty determined carrying of Fresher Declan, Rob Emslie and incoming 1st XV captain Toby Donelan and several gorgeous solo efforts from Vij and Adamu. 43-36

The Present side were well and truly galvanised by their comeback and their sights were set on glory. Fantastic hard graft took them towards the try line, Kieran Burgess eventually going over. The rare but welcome conversion saw the scores level with mere minutes to play. 43-43

Both teams fought tooth and nail in those final minutes, but for the Present team it was sadly not to be. The ball squirted out of a Penguin dominated scrum 5 meters from the line needing only to be dropped on by the Past side to secure the vital game winning try. The final whistle blew and the game belonged to the Penguins. A fantastic close-fought game to cap off a great season of great rugby and some well deserved beer and gin to follow. A huge thank you to all who turned out for the day!

Full Time: Past 48 - Present 43



