

Experience the key in final replay

SAM ALEXANDER

REIGNING premiers Cronulla will boast a massive 456 games of first-grade experience when they take on a dominant Penrith in today's NSW Cup grand final rematch.

Nathan Gardner, Nathan Stapleton, Daniel Holdsworth, Matt Prior and Junior Moors provide the foundation for this valuable experience, which will no doubt be put to the test as the Panthers chase five wins on the trot.

The Sharks, coming off a crushing 46-10 win over the Newtown Jets, will again look to the talents of last week's three-try hero Jacob Gagan.

Cronulla coach Tony Herman is confident his team is ready for today's showdown at Remondis Stadium.

"It's a grand final replay, we beat them last year but we expect them to be ready," Herman said. "Obviously there's been some change in personnel but we've got some players from last year and so do they."

"We've prepared really well, we're looking forward to it."

Elsewhere, the New Zealand Warriors go head-to-head with the Jets in Newtown, and the round is wrapped up as the Bears host Wentworthville at North Sydney Oval.

Storm blown over



Warrior David Fusitua scores a spectacular try. Picture: Getty Images

NICK SMART

MELBOURNE Storm coach Craig Bellamy has accused his players of not being on the same page after another loss in last night's Anzac Day blockbuster at AAMI Park.

In front of a record Storm home crowd of 28,716, the gutsy New Zealand Warriors survived an onslaught early in the second half to score a memorable 16-10 win.

Melbourne remain outside the NRL top eight after dropping three out of their last four matches with the dreaded State of Origin period in sight.

"We're struggling to all get out on the same page at the moment," Bellamy said. "One week we have some players playing good and others not so good and the next week it spins around a bit. We're just sort of looking a bit foreign to each other at times."

Melbourne had plenty of chances in the second half to overrun the Warriors but just could not crack their strong defensive line. Ironically, the Warriors came into the match as the worst defensive side in the NRL.

"They (the Warriors) defended really well (in the second half)," Bellamy said.

"We made enough line breaks to win the game – we're just couldn't finish them off."

"You have to give the Warriors a wrap for the way they defended."

Warriors coach Andrew McFadden could not praise his players enough for the way they toughed it out.

"I am incredibly proud of them," he said. "I thought it was a courageous effort."

The match was highly physical and played at a very high intensity right from the opening whistle.

Melbourne had good early field position but then gave away two penalties in quick succession. The visitors capitalised – working it out wide for the first try, winger David Fusitua scoring in the corner.

It sparked the Warriors, who played with freedom and looked dangerous every time they surged forward.

WARRIORS 16 (D Fusitua S Johnson F Mateo tries S Johnson 2 goals) bt MELBOURNE 10 (K Proctor Y Tonumaipa tries C Smith goal) at AAMI Park. Referee: Ashley Klein, Adam Gee. Crowd: 28,716.

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