

Rousing speech inspires ACS(I) to reclaim B Division rugby title from rivals St Andrew's



1 of 2 Anglo-Chinese School (Independent) rugby B Division players celebrating their 15-11 win in the final against St Andrew's Secondary School on May 6. ST PHOTO: AZMI ATHNI

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SINGAPORE – Despite not being on the National Stadium pitch for the B Division boys' rugby final on May 6, Anglo-Chinese School (Independent)'s Jeremiah Lee played a key role in their triumph.

The Secondary 4 student, who was sidelined after suffering a concussion in their 46-7 semi-final win over Raffles Institution (RI) on April 25, gave a rousing speech in the dressing room that had his teammates tearing up.

He said: "This is the last year for us. Not all of us will play together as a team after this."

Fired up by his words, ACS(I) beat fierce rivals St Andrew's Secondary School 15-11 to wrest the title back, having lost 19-12 to the same opponents in the 2023 final.

"His speech in the locker room really got us psyched up," ACS(I) captain Jansen Ling, 15, told The Straits Times.

"We were all tearing up. His speech was very emotional.

"It got us to think that we were playing for something bigger than ourselves. It's for the school and for the seniors who lost last year."

Coach Adrian Chong, who called Jeremiah one of his best players, said: "I'm very happy that the boys crossed the hurdle today.

"We took our chances better and they had a little bit more belief in themselves today.

"I think they really did it for Jeremiah."

No. 8 Isaac Kong, who scored ACS(I)'s second and final try, added: "He's an amazing player and a very good teammate to us all. It feels awesome that we were able to play our hearts out for him.

"It really was very personal to us and very emotional that we got the win for Jeremiah."



ACS(I) students with a poster of No. 8 Isaac Kong, who scored the second and final try to seal a 15-11 win against fierce rivals St Andrew's Secondary School. ST PHOTO: AZMI ATHNI

From the whistle, the ACS(I) boys were out to avenge their 2023 defeat.

A fiery start saw them convert a penalty kick in the fourth minute before St Andrew's answered with two of their own.

But six minutes before the interval, ACS(I) fullback Iestyn John burst through a wave of blue and white to score the game's first try.

His team held a 10-6 lead after a successful conversion.

Iestyn, 14, said: "The first half was one of the hardest I've ever played in my life. It was very tough and tiring."

With 16 minutes to play, Isaac scored the second try to make it 15-6 before St Andrew's Lloyd Ong answered with another try five minutes later.

A chaotic final five minutes saw both teams exchanging possession, but ACS(I) held out for the victory which cued frenzied celebrations.

Secondary 4 student Isaac, who missed the 2023 final due to injury, added: "It feels like we are taking revenge for our teammates last year. I was absolutely thrilled to score the second try because I knew it would put us in the lead and it just feels amazing."



Anglo-Chinese School (Independent) fullback Iestyn John on his way to scoring a try against St Andrew's Secondary School on May 6. ST PHOTO: AZMI ATHNI

The outpouring of joy continued for ACS(I) in the A Division boys' final, as their seniors sealed a ninth straight title with a 20-12 win over RI. It was the seventh consecutive time both schools had met in the final.

Tries from ACS(I) vice-captain Ryan Hia, Jedd Tan and Javier Ling propelled them to the win.

With 10 minutes to play, ACS(I) held a slender 8-7 advantage but Jedd and Javier scored two tries in the 51st and 55th minute respectively to put the tie beyond doubt.

Jedd, who recovered from an elbow tendon injury to play in the final, said: "It was very tense. I thought we might actually lose if they scored a try. But the moment I started breaking through, I knew the game was over."

ACS(I) captain Isaac Chow said his team had watched New Zealand win the HSBC SVNS Singapore at the same venue over the weekend, before claiming victory themselves a day later.

He added: "Their game was also quite close, 17-14 in the final. It's an amazing feeling. It's my last time for AC having played 12 years and it means a lot to end on a high."