The Diocesan Primary School Rugby Gala day was held on 5th June at the International Stadium, Coffs Harbour. The day presented itself with clear blue skies, which was in contrast with the two previous years.

This year’s gala day saw 7 teams participate from five schools, Mary Help of Christians Sawtell, Holy Family Catholic Primary Skennars Head, St Joseph’s Alstonville, St Augustine’s Coffs Harbour and St Carthage’s Lismore.

Once again teams were playing for positions that would eventually find themselves playing off for the Cup, Plate and Bowl. The teams were broken up into two pools, and played each other in the respective pools in the preliminary rounds. Teams were then seeded and placed in pools for the play-off for the Cup, Plate and Bowl honours.

Once again this concept was extremely well received as it allowed the improving Rugby schools to play off against schools of similar skill base and size. All teams played at least four games during the day and were competitive to the final siren.

We were extremely lucky to have Mr Bruce Frame (ARU North Coast Development Officer), Mr Lance Smith (JPC Coffs Harbour) and three boys from John Paul College who are in the Rugby Referee Development program, officiating on the day.

St Augustine’s Maroon, Coffs Harbour, Holy Family Skennars Head and St Carthage’s Gold, Lismore and St Joseph’s Alstonville found themselves playing off in the Semi Finals, for the Cup and the chance of representing the Lismore Diocese at the State Catholic finals. This pool was hotly contested and went right down to the wire.

St Joseph’s Alstonville played St Augustine’s, Coffs Harbour in the final. This game was a wonderful display of rugby and sportsmanship, with St Joseph’s Alstonville running out the eventual winners 28 – 0 but not before a great arm wrestle with Coffs Harbour. It had been ten years since St Joseph’s has won the Gala Day.

St Joseph’s Alstonville will now go on and represent the Lismore Diocese in Sydney on 26th August at the NSW Catholic Primary Sport KO Final (venue TBC). We would like to offer our congratulations to the team and good luck to the boys in Sydney. Make sure you cherish the experience.

The Plate was also keenly contested between Holy Family Skennars Head and St Carthage’s Lismore, with Holy Family eventually being announced the winners of the Plate.

The Bowl playoffs were between Mary Help of Christians-Sawtell, St Augustine’s Green Coffs Harbour and St Joseph’s Alstonville No. 2. It was great to see these players playing off for the Bowl as it allowed them to show their skills against players of a similar standard. The skill level was high and the enthusiasm was higher still, right up to the final whistle. Congratulations to Mary Help of Christians, Sawtell and St Augustine’s Green Coffs Harbour being joint winners.

Finally a big thank you to all players, coaches and parents that participated on the day. It was played in true rugby spirit with all teams being equally supported in a positive and encouraging way.