

Kent Salver Final at Ashford
7th May 2006

Guy's Hospital RFC 34 - 24 Ashford RFC

On a splendid day in Ashford, the Guy's Hospital 1st XV won their first piece of silverware in many years. The prize money of several hundred pounds will also swell the depleted coffers. The score reflects an enjoyable match, one where Guy's were superior in the first 30 minutes but tries either side of half-time let the opposition back into the game. Exchanges throughout the remainder of the match eventually saw Guy's victorious by 10 points.

After 25 minutes, Guy's were 20 points ahead. Two tries from the pack, and a goal and a penalty from Forsyth gave the players and spectators the impression that the side in blue and gold would be easily triumphant. The domination in the early exchanges was almost complete. The effective Guy's back row meant that the backs had plenty of ball. The two centres of Hone and Turner made numerous breaks, too good in fact for the sweltering forwards to capitalise upon. The hot conditions meant that fitness would have an impact towards the end especially if the desire to play good rugby had waned.

The first two scores followed Forsyth's penalty kick. Once again the pack used their lineout as an effective weapon, trampling all over the Cranbrook defenders who attempted to collapse the maul. Both tries resulted from similar patterns. Wheeler scored the first on the right and our number 8, Morgan touched down the second. Cranbrook suffered at the hands of our lineout in our earlier league encounter, and again they were found wanting. Matthew Morgan made another very good break down the left hand side soon after his try. In attempting to keep his feet off the touchline in a comical ballet routine, his pass inside was unfortunately forward.

As mentioned sloppy defending and careless handling granted two tries to the opposition either side of half time. In the 60th minute, after making our first change, Turner put Guy's further in the lead. Fast play moved Guy's from flank to flank, and after defending 6 or 7 phases the defence was scattered. Turner fancied his chances in a foot race with his opposite man pinned his ears back for the line. Wheeler ran a clever dummy line, giving the outside centres enough room to touch down on the right corner flag. Forsyth converted confidently. Cranbrook made another score before the game was put beyond doubt by scrum half Ewboy, who made a superb break from a ruck. Seeing a retreating blindside defence he ran hard at the gaps, and overcame them with his pace. A kick under the posts completed a fine afternoon for Forsyth.

To their credit, Cranbrook persevered to the end, scoring once more late on. It was disappointing not to have won by more, but it is hard to motivate oneself in the second period when you enjoy a 20-point cushion.

The game ended not soon enough for the shattered teams of both sides. A most enjoyable presentation followed on the pitch before the jubilant Guy's team repaired to the bar for the last time.

Rhys Davies

Tries: Morgan, Wheeler, Forsyth, Turner, N. Ewboy

Cons: Forsyth (3)

Pens: Forsyth (1)

Team: Bartosiak-Jentys (Whyte 70), Wheeler, Sheppard (Beckett 80), Davies, Rowland, Halls (Whyte 60), Wilson, Morgan, N. Ewboy, Forsyth, Hone, Turner, Staten, Blundell, Struts