

**Kent 1 League Fixture at Honor Oak Park
24th September 2005**

Guy's Hospital RFC 3 - 22 Ashford RFC

Guy's suffered their first defeat of the season at home to a strong Ashford side. Out muscled by a heavier pack and with a weakened back row, Guy's struggled to achieve comparability upfront.

Guy's went into the match with a strong side, the only possible point of concern was the back row, which saw Ben Wheeler start at 8 and a debutant at open side. The match got off to a ferocious start, with Ashford using their heavy pack to attack the fringes. The tone of the game was set from the first scrummage, which saw the home side retreat at a rate of knots. Without clean ball, the scrumhalf was in for a difficult afternoon. For the first 15 minutes, Guy's were camped on the line, with only fierce tackling preventing the away side crossing the whitewash. Fortunately, Guy's were able to clear their lines, stopping Ashford from turning pressure into points. Almost straight after, blind side Iain Wilson was sadly forced to leave the field to have a nasty head injury, leaving the scratch back row further reduced.

Ashford soon took advantage crossing the line out wide, with the conversion just scraping over. Realising that we were in for a game, the backs soon were able to find holes in the opposition defence, Kennedy the fly half being particularly adept. With a few continuous phases Guy's were awarded a penalty which Brigstocke converted bringing the score to 7-3. An Ashford penalty just before half time, made the score 10-3 at the break.

During the second period, the home side found it very difficult to assert their authority. A few wayward lineouts frustrated the backs who felt they had the upper hand in the three-quarters. The closest Guy's came to scoring was through a catch and drive that was held up over the line. The referee whilst having a good game did make some peculiar decisions particularly around the ruck.

The most disappointing episode came when the Ashford inside centre made a mazy run, beating countless tackling and scoring under the posts. Tackling has been a strong feature so far, and to see the opposition penetrate our defences was most unsatisfactory. Tiredness and a feeling that the opposition were one score too many ahead may have contributed.

Whilst the score line may suggest a convincing victory for the away side, this was certainly not the case. If in the return fixture Guy's can reliably secure our own set piece possession and capture the ball quickly in the breakdown, we should reverse the result.

Rhys Davies
Captain

Pens: Brigstocke