

## Guy's Hospital v Askeans

16/12/06

49-10

This is a fixture which is much anticipated by all as it tends to mean several things for GHRFC. Askeans RFC for the last 'I don't know how many times', have been the opposition for us on the last Saturday before Christmas. They are a team we all enjoy playing as the last post match is of the highest standard and a good preparation for the Christmas dinner. It also always seems to be a high scoring fixture with some extravagant rugby coming from both sides. And luckily for GHRFC this year was to be no different.

A crisp and dry mid-December's day set the scene with the pitch in immaculate condition having not been played on since 25<sup>th</sup> November. Guy's won the toss and elected to start playing the game away from the pavilion avoiding the low lying bright sunshine. However surprisingly the Askeans captain decided to receive the kick! With a good restart Guy's put early pressure on the opposition and having finally got possession the home side put in some expansive phases with impeccable discipline and recycling. After several quick-fire rucks the fly half Kendall jinked through a gap in the opposition backline and scored under the posts. (+con, 7-0)

Much of the pre match talk focused on the ability to not let the opposition straight back into the game after a score, but unfortunately this was exactly what GHRFC did immediately after the restart. Guy's failed to collect the ball from the restart and some sloppy defence meant Askeans were awarded a penalty in front of the posts just outside the 22.

Fortunately Guy's sprung back and cancelled out the Askeans penalty with one of their own after some good phase work that could not quite penetrate the strong defence.

The game then slightly fell flat for a bit and Guy's kept trying to play some hard running rugby to break the stalemate. Guy's then found themselves with a lineout between the 22 and 10m line. In the same frame of mind of expansive rugby, Guys spread the ball wide off the top of the lineout. A rare miss pass from Blundell to Forsythe was then again shipped out to the wing where Staten stepped in off his reliable right inside the full back to score under the posts. (+con, 17-3)

Again the home side let their concentration slip for a brief moment to let Askeans in for a try straight after the restart. Guy's collected the ball well and instead of clearing their lines there was an opportunity to attack from deep. However a forward pass was given resulting in an Askeans scrum inside the Guy's 22m line. A penalty resulted from scrum which they decided to kick into the corner. A well rehearsed set lineout move saw the Askeans pack maul over the line to touch down which was well converted. (17-10)

Again the game went into a bit of a lull where the majority of the play stuck in the middle of the pitch, with exchanges of physical periods of rugby being blown by both sides. The last exchanges of the half saw guys creep up to the opposition 22 and lack of discipline gave the home side an easy 3 points to finish the half with a 10 point lead. (Half time 20-10)

Guys came flying out of the break with real intent and some spectacular interplay between the backs and forwards set the tone for the second half. Special note has to go to Gurvir Josan for his uncharacteristically immaculate handling skills picking up several balls from his ankles. The initial pressure resulted in a well deserved penalty which

Guy's decided to put into the corner confident that they would be able to convert possession and territory into points. A good catch and drive was eventually brought to a halt which was then spun out wide. The fly half Kendall ignored a four man overlap to easily step inside to again score under the posts (+con, 27-10)

Guys knew that they could really put the squeeze on the opposition with some linked phases. Fitness was beginning to show and the exquisite skill levels were on exhibition. Some great backs play gained Guy's some more territory and Forsythe playing at full back wasted the two fastest players on the pitch to go for glory but failed to keep hold of the ball.

Fortunately for him Guy's quickly regained possession and quickly got back into the interlinking rugby that had been characteristic of the guys play that day. Another off load from Josan put Rhys Davies through the middle of the defence. With his lengthy legs leaping him linewards, he suddenly found himself running away from his support was eagerly waiting for him in the centre of the pitch. He went touchline towards his left wing team mate and only the full back to beat. A most outrageous 'over-the-head' dummy left the full back for dead to walk over in the corner. (-con, 32-10).

The guy's confidence was growing inversely proportionally to the oppo's fitness and hope of getting anything out of this game. This was particularly well illustrated with the full back fielding a poor clearance on the half way line. His nearest support was a decent passing distance away but instead he attempted a cross field kick which slightly stunned everyone, particularly the receiver Adam Staten who proceeded to knock it on!!

Some fantastic defence meant that nothing came of the error and in fact continual pressure by guy's meant that they were awarded a penalty on the 10m line which was converted by Gretton. (35-10)

The flow of the game remained going towards the Askeans try line with more productive counter attacking by the back three. This resulted shortly with another try where Forsythe did all the hard work almost to throw it all away by giving a dodgy pass inside to Staten who managed to keep it in hand and score under the posts. (+con, 42-10)

The aim for guys was to reach that all significant 50 point mark but time was not on their side. With the restart knocked on by the Askean pursuers on the Guy's 22m line Guy's were awarded a scrum in the middle of the field on their 22. A well rehearsed blind side move from 8,9,15 and 14 saw the raw pace of Luki skin past his wing with remarkable ease to pop inside to Forsythe to score under the posts allowing time for only the conversion. (+con, 49-10)

Some other mentions should go to other players for various reasons. Spud for his failing efforts to squash his opposite number who did not have the strongest D but spud still managed to knock on when confronted with a one-on-one situation. The front row just had one of those days where they appeared to be able to do no wrong...what with Gurv's hands, Troy's rocksteady stature and Sinus's 'Maurice-induced' efforts at striking against the head.

A fantastic performance by the boys was topped off with spectacular jovialities at the well respected venue that is Belushi's on borough high street.

Tries: Kendall x2, Staten x2, Davies, Forsythe

Cons: Gretton x 5

Pens: Gretton x 3