

**Guy's 2<sup>nd</sup> XV vs. Blackheath 3<sup>rd</sup> XV**  
**Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> February**  
**Lost 31-9**

Guy's and Blackheath is a fixture of true significance. Not only is this the oldest club fixture in the world, but these two sides have enjoyed closely fought games over several years as they have simultaneously risen their way through the Kent merit tables. Of late, Blackheath have taken the upper hand, however the final score of this fixture does little to reflect the close and fierce contest.

The Guy's team welcomed back Tom Jackson and Martin Cook to the pack and saw the versatile Jamie Jackson move into his unfavoured position of second-row, with Joe 'Papan' Hamilton taking the coveted Number 6 jersey.

When Blackheath eventually left the warmth of their changing room and the game got underway, Guy's immediately found themselves on the back foot as they conceded an early try as the Blackheath inside-centre sliced through the defence. Despite this early score from their back line, it became evident that Blackheath were content on keeping the ball close and giving the young Guy's whippersnappers a lesson in the art of mauling. Guy's in contrast, underweight up front but with the superior ball handling skills, fitness and pace out wide chose a more expansive game. Several infringements gave Brigstocke two easy penalty attempts leaving the half time score poised at 12-6.

A further penalty closed the gap in the second half, before Blackheath took control up-front and shut Guy's out of the game with an extremely effective brand of ten man rugby. For long periods the boys in blue and gold were found on the back foot, but their defence held strong to wave after wave of fringe runners. Jackson and Cook worked admirably in the loose and Blundell, once again, showed his pedigree as one of the most exciting forward talents in the club. The final score, although highly disappointing, reflected the dominance of the Blackheath pack and the strength of their forward platform.

There is no doubt that this is one of the most 'complete' rugby teams the 2<sup>nd</sup> XV have hosted at HOP in recent years and the result is far from an embarrassment. Instead this is a game from which we can collectively take many positives and is an important stepping stone towards the UH cup.

Team: T.Jackson, O.Laird, B.Wheeler, M.Blundell, J.Jackson, J.Hamilton,  
S.Cartwright (I.Wilson 56), M.Cook, G.Brigstocke (Captain), P.Gush, C.Eggleton  
(T.Kennedy 72), R.Hone, J.Powell, M.Wiggans (S.Reading 65), M.Henderson

Penalties: Brigstocke x3