

Guy's Hospital 1st XV Vs Cranbrook RFC

Saturday 8th November, Guy's Sports Ground, Honor Oak Park.

'Guy's Hospital pile on the points in thrilling 7 try spectacle!'

An overcast and slightly blustery day greeted the two teams for what was the seventh league fixture in this, Guy's 160th season. The first XV has benefited enormously from the consistency in key positions within the team this season, and the side representing Guy's today is carrying a healthy momentum into the middle of the league campaign.

After winning the toss, Capt. David Berry opted to use the wind in the first half, playing towards the club house, in an effort to exert territorial dominance over the Cranbrook XV. Guy's began this fixture knowing that they needed to get points on the board in order to improve their for/against difference in the league table as three teams are currently occupying the second place position. The first try of the match came early doors after Berry threw a miss pass out to Wheeler from a tapped penalty, who then dummied the 'Brook winger to touch down for his first try of the season. Unable to contain his elation, Wheeler ran arms aloft at the pavilion end in celebration. Unfortunately, the home support of Emma, Mouse, Prof. Challacombe and his dog was concentrated in the stand area of the ground and the cricket nets were not as receptive as Ben would have hoped.

The Guy's side was soon camped back in the Cranbrook 22 and after considerable pressure Cranbrook started to concede penalties. Berry nudged a kick into touch towards the 'Brook 5m line from which Guy's were to launch their trademark lineout attack. Hamilton, precise with his throw, picked out Rhys Davies at the middle of the line. On landing, the remaining members of the Guy's pack rallied around Davies and surged towards the try line. It was Rob Whyte in a typical display of his strength that emerged as the try scorer.

The Guy's pack has improved immeasurably since last season, 'Hightower' Davies has relieved pressure on the team on numerous occasions over the last few games by stealing opposition ball at the lineout and today was no exception. The Guy's eight are now far more clinical in their rucking and mauling, with turnovers becoming much rarer than previously. As such, the skilful backs have had much more ball going forwards to play in the old-school way of Guy's rugby.

Cranbrook did not lay down and die, and began to push up into the Hospital half through forward surges off the back of rucks and off their stand off. Guy's then found themselves on their own 5m line defending a scrum after 'Brook were held up over the try line. The Guy's defence was resolute though and the team finished the half with a try by Matt Wiggins following several phases linking backs and forwards, Rhys Davies providing the scoring pass after pouncing on a loose ball.

At the break the Hospital side led three tries to nil, the score: 21-0, with Berry having slotted all three conversions.

Following the interval, Guy's edged further into the lead with a try by debutante winger Sho after what the captain can only describe as 'hands of love' to take the score to 26-0. Guy's then characteristically took their foot of the accelerator to allow Cranbrook a try, after several phases of pressure on the Guy's XV in their own 22, which was duly converted. Guy's 26 Cranbrook 7.

Unlike recent Guy's sides, the side of this season did not sit back on their lead and wilt after the Cranbrook try but resumed the onslaught on the 'Brook defence. Tim Price got himself on the score after taking an inside ball off Berry from a Guy's scrum deep in the 'Brook 22. Price stepped off of his right foot and was able to stroll through both sets of packs that were slightly bewildered having just broken from the scrum moments earlier to take the try count to 5-1.

The Guy's attack continued from the restart and eventually the Cranbrook defence was breached by a powerful, penetrating run by Turner, who gained many hard yards all afternoon. Turner broke free short of the half metre line but was eventually brought down within touching distance of the Cranbrook try line, much to the disappointment of the prolific try scorer! Cranbrook then conceded several penalties on their own try line before their winger conceded the penalty try by refusing to retreat from a tap penalty taken by Berry.

The final try of the game came from yet another quick penalty taken by Berry in the Cranbrook 22 area. Berry's pass found Rob Whyte, who stayed strong in the tackle to find Wheeler on his outside shoulder. The remainder of the contest was fought in the Guy's half with a period of sustained pressure on the Hospital try line resulting in the yellow carding of hooker Joe Hamilton for killing the ball in a ruck. Still the Guy's defence refused to budge an inch and the match ended with the score 45-7 in favour of the boys in blue and gold.

It remains to be seen whether Guy's can maintain their emphatic form for the forthcoming clash with league leaders Lordswood in two weeks time.

Team: Ben Wheeler, Joe Hamilton, Tom Jackson, Kit Rowlands, Rhys Davies, Matt Blundell, Jamie Jackson (Rory Andom, 60), Rob Whyte, Sam Rigg, Dave Berry, Tim Price, Roy Turner, Matt Wiggins, Sho, Chris Eggleton.

Tries: B. Wheeler (2)
R. Whyte
M. Wiggins
Sho
T. Price
Penalty Try

Cons: D. Berry (5)

Gin: Rory, Wheeler, Berry, Price.