

Penguins v Old Cranleighans

7th February 2004

Lost 22 - 32

This was played on a remarkably firm pitch given the heavy rain of preceding days. It was a cold, blustery afternoon and the wives and kids soon took refuge in the cosy wooden clubhouse. It was a game played in an excellent spirit except that the referee was clearly undergoing some personal crisis. Any query or exclamation provoked a spasm of fury, directed largely at the Penguins whose penalty count and enforced retreats were many. The Penguins were clearly a better side and perhaps because of a perverse generosity, kicked the ball into waiting arms several times. Once, from a 22 metre drop out the ball went in the opposite direction to that where the Guys defenders were concentrated and Cranleighans ran in unopposed. Geraint Thomason scored two first half tries after a fine handing movement. His presence amongst the backs while the rest of the forwards are rucking or mauling is a characteristic of his play but who can complain when he scores tries. Excellent possession in the loose were secured by Ben Challacombe and George Tsolakides, the scrums were well matched but the side fared badly in the line out. Lifting, leaping and flying are simply not for Penguins. At half time the score was 15-10 and that margin to Cranleighans persisted throughout the remainder of the game. Ronan Brown converted a try by Luka Asoventi, drop kicking from the touchline Marcus Rivaldi scored another try to add to a total tally of four. Charlie Beardmore pulled a calf muscle and moved to scrum half, spending much of the game limping between scrums and intimidating the opposition. Alan Mistlin was one of several who nearly scored, this timelurching to the blind side from a ruck and being held up on the line. The fastest runner, Nick Gibbons had already been swimming and cycling that day so it was little wonder that he faded just as he reach the opposition try line. The Guys side played some brilliant handling rugby, mainly in the last 5 minutes when the game was already lost. Having given so many gifts to the opposition, the side decided that it really should show who were better. Alas, timing is everything.

Team: C. Howell, T. Gibson, G Tsolakides, D. Gibson, G. Thomason, B. Challacombe, A. Mistlin, C. Beardmore, R. Brown, L. Asoventi, N. Gibbons, M. Rivaldi, Janusz Kaminski