

Kent 1 League Fixture at Honor Oak Park 30th October 2004

Guy's Hospital RFC 32 - 19 Dover RFC

Today was a fine example of Guy's rugby at its best. The fine weather suited our pattern of play well, and the spectators at HOP were not disappointed. It was imperative that Guy's achieved victory today, since they had endured two frustrating results in previous weeks. Experience from last season showed that we were able to topple the best in the league, and today was no different. The final point's difference of 13 could well have been more, and it is a shame that we did not thrash Dover off of the park.

Guy's took to the field with a strong 15, with two on the bench. In the pre-match talk, Davies had stressed to go out and play solid rugby, concentrate on tackling, ball retention the tactic of short, short, long. The boys in blue and gold did not disappoint with a fierce opening fusillade culminating in a fine try for Turner. Swift ball to the wing saw our man one on one with his opposite number. A devilish chip over the top saw Turner catch his own ball and sprint over the line for 5 points. Maintaining momentum, a second score came along soon after. A welcome change in terms of total pack weight saw the home pack dominate much of the game both tight and in the loose. Draft scrumhalf Brigstocke had the luxury of a forward moving scrummage and he used this to fine effect. Penetrating runs from centres Hone and Berry, supported with efficient ball retention opened up space allowing Kennedy to score in the corner. 10-0 up with only 10 minutes played!

Another welcome difference was that it appeared that Dover suffered from poorer discipline than ourselves. Constant backchat allowed Guy's to progress up the field and manoeuvre ourselves into kickable positions. Somewhat erratic kicking from Berry only allowed us to capitalise on one occasion but nevertheless it pushed Guy's into a comfortable lead. The away side, not used to being behind struggled to fine their feet in the face of solid home scrums and lineouts. Lineouts have indeed been a useful weapon so far this season, Davies and Laird again doing well, and something which will hopefully continue. However, the Dover backs were never scared to run the ball, and run they did! Intelligent lines forced our backs into making many tackles, and eventually this wore us down. Gaps appeared out wide, and the forwards were strewn around the defensive line. The inevitable try came, bringing the halftime score to 13-5.

During the much-needed break, the team discussed the opening half drawing attention to their faults and weaknesses. Many intelligent comments were banded around. In the end though, this game was there for the taking, and a victory was the only possible outcome.

Following a quick squeeze Guy's were soon again on the front foot. Powerful drives from the lineouts, combined with quick running allowed the backs to operate with some freedom. Outside centre Berry was the next top get his name on the score sheet. A thoughtfully angled run left the Dover defence at sixes and sevens. Missed tackles and cheeky side steps allowed our ginger haired historian to notch up 5 more points.

A conversion followed, leaving the game well on our side. A rampant Guy's team did not let up the pressure. The oldest club in the world had a scrum on the away team's 5-metre line. The attempted pushover failed, as did the resultant pick and go from the base of the maul. However, always wise to a clever pass, Rob Whyte passed the to the waiting Turner who scored his 2nd of the game. The points fest did not end there. Further pressure saw Guy's win a penalty 8 metres out. Whyte, again using his initiative went for the line as Dover retreated. One of the opposition could not help himself and tackled the big Number 8. The only option was a penalty try, which was converted. 32-5! The league leaders did not know what had hit them.

To their credit, Dover did not give up at all. One can see why they had won 5 out of 5. In the final 10 minutes, they scored two tries bringing the score to 32-19. It was good play from the away side, supplemented by our tiredness and lack of concentration, which allowed them to score the points.

Overall, a fine victory for Guy's, a standard has been set which the rest of the league must follow. We have shown that we are capable of beating anybody on our day. The challenge is now to approach every game with the same mentality and work to go unbeaten from now on. With a commitment to training, and concentration during the game, it is entirely possible.