

## **'SCINTILLATING GAME SEES LUCKLESS GUY'S FAIL TO BREAK DUCK AND BRING HOME THE BACON'**

**5<sup>th</sup> October 02: London 4 South East: Old Dunstonians 30 – 22 Guy's Hospital RFC**

The game had everything. We saw exhibition rugby from both sides, end-to-end exhilaration, contentious refereeing decisions, dancing from Berry, fighting from Smith and Llewelyn, thunderous tackles, injuries galore, and blood being spilt – all for the love of the game. But once again amid the blood, sweat, toil and tears, the two points could not be grasped. Guy's remain pointless and winless after three very close games, and are languishing at the foot of the table. The day had started badly too, Jimbo forgetting the kit and Jamie Jackson letting the club down badly and disappointing all when he actually turned up in Number One's.

In their centenary year and in their celebrations, it seemed fitting that Old Dunstonians should have their gloriously cut pitch graced by the boys from Guy's. It was even more so that their masses of supporters, looking on from the bar end of the pitch should be treated to such a spectacular manifestation of how the game should be played. In the end though, OD's were strong enough up front to make their possession count when they needed to.

The game started furiously, and it was as clear as daylight that this was going to be a terrific game. With the front row clashing like the titans, heavy blows were exchanged. Llewelyn and Smith in particular were buoyed by the presence of 'Traitor Don' (former Guy's stalwart) in the OD front row. Understandably, Don found himself used frequently at the bottom of ruck's as the Guy's doormat. He must, I'm sure have had a back full of aluminium by the close of play. It wasn't long then before the first blows were exchanged, with Llewelyn at the heart of it. Soon though Guy's took the lead in a game for the first time this season when a slick well drilled back line move went disastrously wrong, but somehow allowed Behn to cut the OD line and Breeze to finish in the corner. What a start, but it wasn't to remain that way.

In typical Guy's fashion, the lead could not be capitalised on. Rather, Guy's found themselves on the wrong end of a good fightback from OD who added three tries and a penalty before half time to lead 18-10 at the interval. Guy's second try coming from another break from Breeze who fed Berry coming round on the loop at pace to beat their winger in a race to the corner. In a contentious refereeing decision, the try was given after linesman Ben Wheeler gave the referee the nod. Feeling justifiably aggrieved the OD supporters subjected 'Wheels' to wretched abuse for the rest of the game. Replacing Mendonca in the second half, Wheels found the front row a far more pleasant place than running the line in front of the home supporters.

It had been a bruising first half, with Rigg having to go to the blood bath when his chin was split open after a rendezvous with an OD boot. Half time offered a welcome break from the frenetic pace of the game, as coaches Dave and Steve in conjunction with the Skipper Price, set about righting some wrongs. The message was clear: the game was there for the taking. Who scored first in the second period would win the game. It was tight, but OD's used their heads and played league Rugby. Stealing our ball in the line out, after reading the loop on Mendonca's grenades, they pinned Guy's down in their 22 and kept the ball in the tight, maximising the presence of their big men. They went further ahead when their prop took a pop to smash his way over from 5 yards out. The response from the hospital side was good and immediate, Berry running in a long distance try after a swift counter attack via Powell, Behn and Nicholls. Powell in the process, taking a hefty blow and forcing Guy's into a change.

The pace of the game remained, with Guy's pillaging OD ball, taking quick penalties and camping in the OD half for much of the second half, but that final pass could not be made. After conceding another try to go 30-17 down, the game seemed to be over, but Berry fed Turner who beat his man to the try line to maintain his try a game ratio. The effort was to no avail though. Despite some desperate play in the last ten minutes of the game, with the ball being flung around and the OD tested to the bone, Guy's could not quite wriggle back into the game. Under pressure Berry tried to run from under his own posts, dancing round a couple of men, but it just wasn't Guy's day.

The loss once again emphasised the dictum that you can't play without the ball, and that you must win your own. When you do, it must be used to maximum effect; fortune favours the brave after all. You may be disappointed with failure, but you're doomed if you don't try. There is a lot of light at the end of this tunnel. Guy's must learn from their silly mistakes; experience is a clear teacher, and men will learn no other way. Like a turtle, progress can only be made when you stick your neck out.

A victory is within our grasp. The quality of the teams in this league so far seems very equal. Guy's three league games so far have been close affairs. It is going to be about who performs on the day and who can take their chances. The Guy's XV though is made of mettle substance, and they must

now show that they are worth their breeding. They can get out of this rut. The team is hurting but like an injured wild beast it must get angry and fight for its life.

TEAM: R. Clinton, J. Mendonca (B. Wheeler), A. Smedley, M. Morgan, J. Jackson (K. Rowland), W. Llewelyn, C. Smith, E. Nichols, S. Rigg, D. Berry, T. Price (c), R. Turner, J. Powell, R. Breeze, E. Behn

TRIES: Berry 2, Turner, Breezey

CONS: Price