

## Guy's Hospital 1<sup>st</sup> XV 50 – 7 Foots Cray RFC 1/11/08

The Guy's men travelled to Beccehamians for this home fixture in torrential rain freezing cold and biting wind, having got off the train and foot-slogged it from the station the team were damp but spirits were heightened after the defeat to New Ash Green. Donning as much clothing as possible and still waiting for a 10 to arrive, the Guy's team warmed up, or at least avoided getting any colder. Two borrowed balls and a win of the toss saw Guy's attacking up the hill and into the win, confident that with these advantages in the second half the fitter team would prevail. A poorly fielded kick-off saw Guy's lose possession and a quick blindside pass allowed the Fooths Cray second row to trundle down the slope, and with tackles going in at chest height his bulk saw off all comers and Guy's were down 0-7.

Stern words from the skipper saw the kick off ball stolen through good counter-rucking, with Fooths Cray seemingly content to lean on. A few phases of recycling allowed Trotter to unleash the Guy's backline eventually sending Gasper in over the line by the corner flag, Steele imperiously notching the extras, 7-7.

Further high-quality positional kicking saw Guy's go close to the Cray line. Halls, stepping in at hooker, hitting Barnes with great accuracy despite the treacherously slippery ball. An attempted drive at the line out was halted, but the ball once again allowed the backs to open up the Cray midfield, with Rehnberg powering through for the score, Steele once again converting well, 14-7.

Buoyed by this passage of good play, Guy's responded well to the inevitable Cray counter-attack, with fringe defence and counter-ruck aplenty. Charles "Peregrine" West, tireless in the backrow dark arts, ably assisted by Diggins allowing Guy's to attack up the hill and Alex "Steve McQueen" Gregory showing Sackeyesque jelly-legs ran a good 40m to outfox the opposition and touch down just before running out of steam, 21-7.

Steele by this point was showing the flair he usually reserves for training and was treating the ball like an extra limb, so remarkable was his touch at times. This allowed debutant fullback Hartley to pick a great line and slide through the wet grass and over the line, Steele again adding the extras from some distance, 28-7.

Guy's continued to romp and the Front row of Elias, Halls and Pacey held firm in the scrum to deny Cray the platform they were looking for. Great counter attacking saw Hartley and Rehnberg both claim their second tries and as the half ended 38-7 Guy's were looking to press their advantage and turn the screw further.

The second half began brightly, and with the wind and the slope Guy's pressured Cray but were unable to add any to their tally until Steele produced a line and touch so deft, the writer needed an explanation as to what occurred. The answer: something akin to magic allowing Harris to power over from 10 yards and Steele to convert, 45-7.

Penalties in quick succession saw Cray loose their tighthead prop, and from the ensuing penalty a pre-arranged move saw Steele tap and pass to Halls on the unprotected blindside, unfortunately the hooker boxed it and dropped the ball clean-sighted for the line earning the derision of both teams and a hefty measure of Juniper. To compound matters, the hapless hooker managed to butcher another clear cut opportunity, leaving him to ruminate on the world of French bread he would later find himself in.

Fortunately, Gasper was able to make amends, scoring in the corner to ensure Guy's hit the 50 points mark, 50-7. The team then defended hard despite some rather interesting use of the boot by the opposition. Suffice to say such tactics did not

perplex the boy's in Gold and Blue as the final whistle went, leaving both teams to flee for the shelter of the changing rooms, and the scalding showers.

Tries: Gasper (2), Gregory, Hartley (2), Harris, Rehnberg (2)

Conversions: Steele (5)

Koffman MoM: S. Trotter

Weight of kit pre match: 12kg

Weight of kit after match: 40kg+

Juniper: Halls