

University of Kent IInd XV vs Guy's King's & St Thomas's IInd XV

KO: 3:00pm Wednesday 30th October 2002, Canterbury

Final Score: Kent 22 – 17 GKT

“Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness, close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;”
- John Keats (1795 – 1821)

Guy's Rugby men sadly do not greet the onset of autumn as kindly as did their great predecessor, and the high winds, rainy match days and treacherous muddy pitches make us all have days when we wonder whether we should have joined the boat club instead. The second fixture of the 2002-2003 season for the 2nd XV saw another sojourn to a provincial town, Canterbury (the one in Kent, not New Zealand). A rather sanguine estimation of our journey time resulted in the team arriving a mere 12 minutes before the kick-off, which could not be delayed due to the rapidly failing sunlight. It was to prove a most unsatisfactory day: bad omens were already being noted when the coach driver stopped the vehicle in the middle of Canterbury and asked his passengers “Does anybody here know where we're going?” Had he been taking directions from Ed Jefferies?

Having finally arrived and changed in record time, GKT took the pitch with 90 seconds to rehearse all the forward and back moves for the game. The Captain would like to note at this point that the situation was not helped by the rather sparse attendance at training on the previous two Monday evenings!

The final few players emerged from the changing rooms just in time for the starting whistle. Stalwart defence denied Kent several times in the opening minutes, and gave the shock to the system that the still slightly travel-fatigued Guy's men needed. After the initial wake up call, GKT pressed home, using their significant size advantage well in open play. The Kent defence was clearly not up to much, and the game seemed to be ours for the taking. The try surely had to come, despite what the referee might think, and eventually the breakthrough fell to Spud Blundell. Scoring first, the opposition on the back foot: everything seemed to be going our way (except for the referee's decisions – more of that later). But then a penalty in our own half was overturned because of an innocuous comment, and GKT suddenly found themselves besieged on their own try-line. Possession was won through some superb rucking by GKT, but unfortunately the 2nd Team Captain found himself in possession of the ball in his own in-zone, with roughly 50 milliseconds before he was flattened by the advancing Kent pack. Proving the maxim that no decision at all is even worse than making the wrong decision, the Captain wavered between kicking the ball, passing the ball to a player who had a realistic chance of clearing the try-line, or grounding the ball. He then attempted to do all three, fumbling the wet ball just in time for it to be grounded by an opponent. A hard-earned lead thrown away, which was to prove the story of the match as far as Guy's were concerned. Momentary lapses in concentration or lack of cohesion in the scrummage (not to mention the somewhat arbitrary decision making by the myopic referee) frequently cost us possession, and in as close a game as this possession means points, and what do points mean?

Guy's fought hard, but let it a second soft try when a miss-kick fell straight in to the arms of the Kent winger, who merely had to walk across the try-line. An excellent counter-attack, despite being 14 men down for much of the second quarter, saw Bradley Tiffin score his debut try and put Guy's back in the game. At half time we

trailed by a mere two points, but it is was not to be. The mud, the rain and the referee (clearly a local favourite, and on first name terms with many of the opposition players) wore down the Guy's men, many of whose "minds had left their bodies here in Kent, and lay pavilion'd in St Thomas's Bar". Kent scored twice more and GKT could not turn tactical advantage into points. Tom Bevir scored a consolation try in the dying minutes, leaving the Hospital side to lick their wounds, count their banana stickers and contemplate on what might have happened had the forwards given the ball to the backs a bit more often. Lessons are their to be learnt, and with any luck we can put this defeat behind us and concentrate on the areas that cost us the game (*this is a plug: everybody to attend training next Monday!!! – skipper*). But it was a damn near run thing: the damn nearest run thing you ever saw in your life.

Trys: Matthew Blundell, Bradley Tiffin, Tom Bevir

Conv: Matthew Blundell x 1

Ginnings: Iain Wilson, James Tebby, Olly Blocker

Team:

Rats Ratnarajah, James Tubby, Gurvir Josan, Duncan "Onion" Austin (Capt.), Lord Tom Jones of Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwlllantysiliogogoch, Dharms Barot, Iain Wilson, Olly "Red Mist" Blocker, Martin Hill, Myron Senthilnathan, Bradley "Geezer" Tiffin, Rob Hone, Jenny Merrick, Tom Kennedy, Tom Bevir, "Matthew" Spud Blundell, Ed "Mercator" Jefferies, Adam Prewett, Phil "Welsh" Welch, Tim Seng, + one Lucozade Inflatable Lilo.