

Kent 1 League Fixture at Honor Oak Park 8th October 2005

Guy's Hospital RFC 21 - 14 New Ash Green RFC

A thrilling spectacle was seen at a glorious Honor Oak Park as Guy's defended like Trojans to prevent the away side from scoring an equalising try. Dogged tackling in the final quarter allowed Guy's a notch up a much needed victory. The home side dominated for much of the game, with good work in the lineout, strong running in the three-quarters and accurate goal kicking from Gretton made Guy's the worthy winners. NAG have recently been promoted from the doldrums of Kent 2, and were perhaps surprised at the vigour of our defence. Furthermore, Guy's ran with purpose and took chances when they presented themselves.

The game began with Guy's playing away from the pavilion, in the midst of a strong crosswind, which certainly had an impact on the game. Efficient rucking allowed Turner et al in the centres to break the line. Transgressions at the breakdown by NAG saw Guy's being awarded a penalty which scrum half Peter Gretton duly converted. Soon after, Gretton doubled the advantage after turnover ball in the lineout.

Finding themselves 6-0 down after 11 minutes, NAG responded with strength and verve. Smart running down the blind, and a subsequent penalty gave NAG a penalty deep in the home 22. Clever lines of running in the centres, opened up space for the opposition thirteen who crossed unopposed. The conversion placed NAG in the lead.

A pattern of play was soon set up as Guy's broke the away defensive line regularly. A quick and strong back-row, something missing of late, allowed Gretton to send the backs off with quick clean ball. Combined with clever tactical kicking, a score was never far off. Indeed, No. 8 Billy Challacombe crossed the line at short range from the base of a ruck. Again, Gretton slotted the conversion, which saw Guy's go into halftime 13-7 in front.

During the second half forays into the opposition, 22 were few and far between. The final period began with NAG having a 5-metre scrum. A weighty tight five gave the scrum half time to send his backline on another surge forward. Tidy play sent the winger into space and fast feet saw him cross the whitewash in the corner despite the close attentions of the blue and gold winger and fullback. An impressive kick added two points and the away side again snatched away the lead. A thrilling match was in prospect!

Luckily, this lead did not last long. An excellent passage of play moved Guy's up the field into a dangerous position, and missed tackles together with traditional flair saw our new winger cross in the corner. So delighted was he to score he did not think to continue his run under the posts! The difficult field position saw the conversion missed. Fortunately, after deftly repulsing another NAG attack, Guy's moved through the centres and gained a penalty near the posts. Gretton then sent us 7 points into the lead. As I mentioned, the remainder of the fixture was spent defending the home try line. Crucial injuries, firstly to Challacombe and then to Wheeler forced Guy's to compete with a weakened team. However, Jon de Mendonca shored things up with a

strong display as replacement hooker. Scrum 5 after scrum 5 gave the away side ample opportunity to even the scores but resolute defending and sheer resolve prevented this from occurring. The game ended as NAG were penalised for crossing in midfield. Gretton did the honours and sent the kick screaming into touch for a well-deserved and most satisfying victory.

Rhys Davies
Captain

Tries: Challacombe, Eltham.

Cons: Gretton

Pens: Gretton (3)