

United Hospitals Round Robin at Honor Oak Park 1st March 2006

Guy's Hospital RFC 20 - 7 Royal Free & University Cottage Hospital RFC

Seldom has HOP been venue to a more eagerly anticipated and bitterly fought contest than this, the last and crucial UH round robin game. RUMS came into this fixture with high spirits; they knew that there was the chance of victory against this slightly weakened Guy's team and a win would allow progression to the final against Imperial Medicals on the 26th March. In the end, notwithstanding some close scares, the home side won the day with a two tries and a penalty in the second half.

True to expectations, the game got off to a frenetic start with both sides making mistakes and struggling to find rhythm. The RUMS fly half used his supporting wind to good effect and pegged back the home side who struggled to compete effectively in the lineout with only one jumper. The front row was also witness to a fierce battle as the north Londoner's caused a number of problems in the scrummage. In a rare foray into the opposition half, and a period of Guy's pressure forced RUMS into giving away a penalty, which was converted by Mike Forsyth. This 3-0 score line was to remain for the rest of the half despite RUMS having many opportunities to equalise but always electing to pack down or tap and go. Fortunately, our experienced back row of Iain Wilson, Pete Davis and Matt Blundell were able to thwart all attacks. The away side were bitterly disappointed to come away without a score, especially after their advantage in terms of possession and territory. The RUMS scrum half was worthy of note, with many a dangerous run down the blind side.

After the interval, Guy's hoped to exert more pressure. It was obvious that we had the potential and ability in all areas of the game, but a resolute defence and fiercely determined attitude made it difficult to find holes. Indeed, RUMS went ahead after 55 minutes, through their impressive scrum half who leapt over the whitewash beneath the posts. At this point it is vital that I mention the spirit of the Guy's team. Despite being unexpectedly behind after an hour of play, they continued to plug away and this ethic paid dividends. Soon, at every stoppage opposition players were receiving treatment for cramp and various other ailments. Within minutes, Guy's had an attacking 5-metre lineout and once again the resulting drive was effective. Oliver Laird found himself with his hands on the ball to take the blue and gold team into the lead once again. Forsyth, clearly having gotten out of bed on the correct side, added the two points. Sensing a further opportunity to capitalise, the Guy's three-quarters moved us clear in the game. Fullback Lucas Rensberg, easily the swiftest player on the field, glided through the opposition defence and deftly rounded his opposite number to score under the posts. The conversion and a later penalty took the score to the final result of 20-7.

The match did not follow the expected pattern with full credit going to RUMS who put on a marvellous performance, pushing the game to the wire. However, equal praise to the home side who eventually broke them down to record a memorable victory.

Rhys Davies

NB. St. Bart's and the London were unable to field a side and so forfeited the fixture.

Tries: Laird, Rensburg

Cons: Forsyth (2)

Pens: Forsyth (2)

Team: Bartosiak-Jentys, Laird, Josan, Davies, Wheeler, Wilson, Blundell, Davis, Brigstocke, Forsyth, Hone, Robinson, Turner, Rensburg, Staten.

Subs not used: Trotter, Diggans