

Past vs Present Scanlan Cup 29th April 2006

Past 14

Present 41

The Scanlan Cup is a fiercely contested affair between present students and veteran members of the club, both desperate to win the much coveted cup. In the past this fixture has been dominated by the veteran sides, and the youngsters have been taught hard lessons by the older and battle hardened players of the club. Since the competition's inception the present team has never managed to triumph.

The day itself was perfect for a game of rugby, the sun shone and the ground was firm and so the scene was set for another epic struggle. The veteran side kicked the game off and immediately the packs of forwards clashed ferociously. At the resulting line out the referee had the misfortune to stray too near to mêlée and tumbled to the ground injured. Luckily there was an abundance of medical knowledge on hand but sadly the referee was unable to continue. Decisive action was taken and a willing and eager spectator was cajoled and persuaded into the spotlight.

The game continued at a fast pace and the present team showed a great flair for running and some strong set pieces which enabled them to confine the veterans to their half for the majority of the first half. Alas, poor support play prevented them from effectively converting the pressure as the defense proved to be resolutely solid. Impatience and frustration led to a spell of poor tackling from the youngsters and the experienced veteran fly half found an opening and scored underneath the posts and converted to leave the present team trailing by 7 points.

This was the wake up call the present team needed to focus them, and right from the restart the tempo and the aggression were vastly increased. The present team's forwards camped out in the past's 22 and the pressure was applied by Gurvir and Coachy Steve in the tight. Time after time the wall of defense players stood firm, but the support play had dramatically improved and the attacking phases chipped away until the backs surged through a weakness and Seng hurtled over the line in the left hand corner. With a magnificent conversion the scores were level and the game was wide open.

Strong attacking skills were displayed by both teams and once again the younger players were struggling to make the first hit tackles. Some superb tackles from Powell and incisive running from Dermot and Yuen kept the junior side in the game but as the veteran defense proved impenetrable. Some flair and audacity was needed to break the deadlock and a scrum on the half way line just before the half time provided the opportunity. A gap in the veterans positioning allowed Welch, the present team's fly half, to put through a well-judged grubber kick. The present back line steamed up the centre and a speedy Seng was able to ground the ball under the posts. The conversion posed little problem and the present side left the field at half-time up 14-7.

The half time talks were spirited and inspiring and both teams returned energized. The present team had the psychological advantage of being ahead but it was of vital

importance to maximize and secure the advantage. This chance came in the most unlikely form of the present captain Goddard, who is by nature a prop forward to the core. Receiving the ball on the inside from the wing, a sudden and completely unexpected burst of pace surprised the veterans and he was able to skip past the stunned defenders and run it in under the posts.

Capitalising on the momentum and the rapidly failing fitness of the veterans, the present team were able to tighten the screw. Overlaps appeared and further tries by Seng through the middle and Fresher Harry on the left wing were almost inevitable. Twinkle-toes Tom Bevir who had been causing problems for the veterans all game seized his opportunity to glide past, through and then back around the defense to seal the veterans fate. Stubborn to the last man the veterans refused to accept this laying down and in the final minutes the veterans demonstrated some fantastic champagne rugby which left the student side speechless. The ball was conjured across the line and converted as if by magic.

The mighty spirit within the present team refused to let them have the last laugh though and so with just one minute remaining the ball was lofted high over the sleeping veteran backs from the restart. The present's quick footed scrum half Trotter and the laziest hooker in the history of Guys took off in pursuit. Unbelievable vision and swiftness from Tebby allowed a splendid passing partnership before releasing Trotter into the corner for a try in the last play of the game. This was the icing on the cake, cake that previously present sides had only dreamed of munching. As the final whistle blew history had been made and the final score line was 41-14 although this was unrepresentative of the quality and determination of the veteran side. It was a very enjoyable game followed by even more fun and hi-jinks at the annual rugby ball and we all look forward to next years clash of the titans.

May the Mighty 3s Roll On!

Written by Tim Seng and Tom Goddard.

Tries: Seng (3), Goddard, Gasper, Bevir, Trotter.

Conversions: Seng (3)

Tom Goddard(c), Gurvir Josan, James Tebby, Taioni , Simon Hill, Sam Gillet, James Powell, Simon Gerrard, Jae Huh, Coachy Steve, Simon Trotter, Toby Welch, Tom Bevir, Rajan Saini, Ashley Yuen, Tim Seng, Nick Grundy, Harry Gasper and Dermot.