

Sheppey v Guy's Hospital (A)
Saturday 4th November
Result: 15-21

After fractitious coach journey Guy's arrived with 45mins to KO. A quick warm up meant the XV were ready for what was to be an extremely physical confrontation!!

The toss was lost by the skipper and Guy's found themselves playing into the low lying sun but took the offer to kick to Sheppey. The "Ditch" was in the best playing condition seen for many a year and perfectly suited for some GHRFC rugby. For the first 20 mins the game was played between the 22s and both sides missed relatively simple penalties to go ahead. The Sheppey defence tried to intimidate their younger and fresher counterparts but some great discipline and courage meant Guy's were able to maintain good ball and force some turnovers despite fists and boots flying left, right and centre.

The first score came when Sheppey managed to scrag the Guy's scrum half and force a turnover from a set scrum in the Guy's 22. But Rhys Davies stepped through and over the ruck to scoop up the loose ball (unseen by the author as he was at the bottom of the ruck with someone trying to break his arm). Like a prancing gazelle Davies showed speed of thought and of foot and those present at the game were blessed to witness the Rhys Davies 20 foot side step to score under the posts. The skipper converted with ease and Guy's led 0-7.

Sheppey then found themselves in the Guy's 22 with some good attacking rugby but some even better defence kept Sheppey out and Sheppey was awarded a scrum on their 5m line. A strike against the head gave Guy's possession but the oppo 9 managed to disrupt the Guy's No8 pick up and after a few physical rucks and some crossing at the fringes Sheppey drove over the line. 5-7 was then the score and 5-7 it remained as luckily the Sheppey kicker did not bring his kicking boots and missed a simple conversion.

Half time came with the game again being played between the 22s and no change to the score.

Although the GHRFC half time chat talked about coming out the blocks again straight after half time they found themselves half asleep for the first 5-10mins. GHRFC tried to run the ball from their 22 but some dropped balls found the boys defending a scrum on the 5m line. A clever move where the 8 pretended to break blind (apparently not knocking on the ball!!!!) and 9 picked up and went open found Sheppey scoring near the posts which was converted much to the relief of the Sheppey supporters. 12-7.

John Kendall (10) was then lost to a pulled quad and so fresher "Jimmy" began to run the game and Jesus came onto the wing!!

A further penalty was also soon put over by Sheppey to make it 15-7 but Guy's returned the favour to make it 15-10. Some high quality rugby then emerged as the Guy's fitness again showed and Sheppey had to resort to even more violence to stop us in our tracks. The ref awarded 2 penalties in quick succession on the Sheppey 10m line which the skipper was able to stick between the uprights. 15-16 and only a few minutes to go left the game well balanced but the momentum and fitness of GHRFC meant that their was really only going to be one winner. Another penalty awarded saw the kick go into the corner and recurrent penalties for collapsing the mall meant Guy's had another lineout on

the 5m line. The next maul however was driven in to touch but the Rhys “the eel” Davies stole the ball at the front of the line which the pack organised round and meant Rory “the sinus” went through to score 10m from the touchline. A missed conversion meant that there was only a 6 point difference. With only 2 mins left at this point in time Guy’s felt and knew that they were to be the winners but a penalty awarded in front of the posts on our 22 at the last play threatened to spoil the day. Some awesome D enforced a knock on and Guy’s ended up victorious.

A superb session in the bar with the 2 skippers initiating the others traditional post match ceremony saw the half back partnership of Pete Gretton and John Kendall receiving the gift of gin. A thoroughly good sing song saw renditions of ‘you can roll a silver dollar’, ‘I don’t want to join the army’ and a finale of ‘be kind to your web footed friend’ with an immediate exit saw Guy’s awarded winners on and off the pitch.

The coach journey back maintained a similar theme of good songs and good beers (with the odd inevitable white Russian). A superb day all round which gives us the platform for a top of the table clash next weekend at Park House!!

Tries: Rhys, Sinus

Cons: Gretton x1

Pens: Gretton x3

Gins: Gretton, Kendall