

University College London RFC 2nd XV vs Guy's King's and St Thomas' RFC 2nd XV

Played at UCL Sports Ground, Shenley, St Albans on Wednesday 5th November 2003

Kick Off 2:45pm

Final Score UCL 17 – 10 GKT

“ Whatever does not destroy me only makes me stronger”

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844 – 1900) *Twilight of the Idols* (1888)

Last Wednesday saw the top of the table crunch match between GKT and UCL. If GKT could win the fixture, they could stand a full six-points clear at the top of the table and almost guarantee promotion in February. Conversely, a victory for UCL would take them top of the table courtesy of their superior points difference. A must-win game, then, for the men in blue and gold.

But events took a turn for the worse as fate unveiled its fiendish cards, and the preceding week took on a nightmarish quality as both Wednesday teams began to leach players to injury, with a casualty rate comparable to the first day of the Somme offensive. The loss of several instrumental players from the Twos was partially remedied by the long awaited return of Magic Myron at stand off, and an equally long postponed return by Olly Blocker to his natural home at losehead. Skipper Duncan Austin was confined to bed for several days by the 'Flu, with Full Back Phil Welch performing admirably in his absence for his debut captaincy. GKT arrived at Shepley hoping for a win, after UCL had lost to mid-table Essex the previous week. The pre-match warm up should have favoured GKT, UCL not even arriving until almost half past two, and it was clear from the early play that the UCL side was clearly not up to much: their forwards lacked bosch, whilst their centres offered about as much resistance as greased ice-cream to the force of the GKT crash ball. Guy's were able to maintain possession for continued periods, but the inevitable-seeming try was far too long in the delivery, wasting valuable time and energy. Repeatedly GKT could not carry the ball the final yard across the line, and on occasions when they did they were cruelly denied by either superb defence or by the whim of the referee (it was hard for the author to differentiate between these from his vantage point on the touch line, although to be three times told that the ball has been held up by an opposition not notable for its tackling prowess stretches one's credulity to its limit). Trying a different tack, GKT tried to brake the stalemate by kicking for the posts, but the heavy winds were to severely limit the team's kicking prospects. Having failed to clasp the three points, GKT finally opened the scoring with a forceful run from left wing Brad Tiffin, showing the steadfast determination that epitomised the team's performance. Devastatingly, UCL were able to score soon after with their only successful attempt to take the game into GKT's half, and the team that had looked so impregnable in offence suddenly buckled under fire on their own try line. The scores at half time were level at five all, but GKT had needed to take much more advantage from the high supporting wind in the first forty minutes. Now attacking into the wind, GKT would surely have to work far harder to get the ball away from their twenty-two. UCL pull in to the lead after another weak spell of GKT defending, but the passion that burns in every Guy's Rugby Player is not so easily extinguished. A heroic run from much-missed Myron drew the two teams level once more. As GKT looked increasingly confident running with the ball, and began to make inroads into the UCL defence, disaster struck, when a wayward pass went to ground and was kicked back towards the GKT sticks, where an enterprising UCL winger was able to ground the ball before the attacking Guy's formation had managed to react. The results of the TV replays much loved in the Southern Hemisphere at present would have made interesting viewing. UCL converted the try under

the posts, and GKT found themselves trailing by seven points in the final quarter of the game. The sheer resolve of GKT should surely have been enough to cross the try-line, but despite four or five repeated infringements by UCL, a penalty try was not forthcoming. The indomitable spirit they displayed deserved a try, but in the end the final reserves of an exhausted GKT could not surmount the UCL try-line defence. Skipper Duncan Austin watched on with disbelief from the side of the pitch as the tragedy unfolded, as his team must have earned themselves a victory, but could not achieve one. In truth there was nothing outstandingly wrong with their performance, one of the best to be seen so far this season. In the end, perhaps, it was merely self-belief that was lacking on our part, but it is now fully acknowledged that UCL, who had seemed so intimidating at the start of the season, are beatable and will have to defeat us at our fortress-home in Cobham, and be the first team to do so in two years, if they want to return to South-East 1 this year. For GKT, we must now decide that we have worked too hard and played too well to contemplate anything else. But we cannot afford to see another such defeat, and as long as every man commits himself completely to the club for the rest of the season, we shall not.

Tries: Brad Tiffin, Myron Senthilnathan

Conv: none

Pen: none

Gin: Phil Welch, Will Buxton, Benjy Dhillon, Jimbo Powell

Squad: Olly Blocker, Iain Wilson, Owen Williams, Will Buxton, Adam Prewett, Ben Diggins, Will Nattrass, Serge Neumand, Tim Seng, Myron Senthilnathan, Brad Tiffin, James Powell, Benjeev Dhillon, Sancos Boland, Phil Welch (Capt.) Togay Koc