

## **Kent 1 League Fixture at Whitstable RFC 11<sup>th</sup> September 2004**

### **Guy's Hospital RFC 21 - 15 Whitstable RFC**

A win is a win. It got quite nerve racking towards the end of the game but Guy's held on to secure the two points. It was definitely a game of two halves, Guy's putting all of their points on the board within twenty minutes, and then having to defend for much of the remainder. Despite it not being the most comprehensive of victories, beating a team away from home, especially a side that have been victorious on our two previous encounters is a reasonable way to begin the season. With many positives coming from the game, there is much for us to build on for next week's fixture with Bromley.

So to the game. Despite a slightly late start from Guy's, Coachy Alan used his race karting (0 to 80 mph and back to 0 in 7 seconds) background to good effect and we made it to Whitstable RFC in good time. Despite having one of the smallest and hottest changing rooms I have ever come across, we eventually got out onto the pitch for 3.00 pm kick-off.

We elected to kick and so began 20 minutes of constant pressure on the Whitstable line. Guy's spent most of the time deep in the opposition 22, and a try was not far away. Despite the success of Pod 1 in getting the ball over the line, the Saffa referee said that the ball had not been grounded. Not to worry since our 5-metre scrum saw No. 8 debutant Relli pick up the ball who then passed to Beaumont Hone who broke a tackle to steam over the line. A conversion followed, 7-0 to Guy's!

The away supporters who were surprisingly plentiful did not have to wait long before the second try. The oppo kicked off deep straight in the hands of Percy. Immediately countering towards the open side, he linked with the backs. Clean hands saw Rob pass to Roy, who then drawing the player released winger Tom Kennedy to score of the best tries I have seen. Pure champagne rugby! The Kent seaside boys did not know what had hit them. 14-0 down within 2 minutes of being 0-0.

More was to come. A solid lineout saw the ball passed to Pete Gretton, who spotting a dogleg in their line made a superb break. Seeing Roy on his shoulder, he passed to him to allow Turnstyle to score Guy's third. Pete kept his 100% record to make it 21-0.

It was at this point that Whitstable decided that the way to beat us was to become fighters, not lovers. Cheeky punches and stamps from their 8 and fly half showed the way that the game was going to go. Percy left the field with a 7 cm cut down his forehead, but this allowed Marc Carbasse to grace the field. Whitstable would keep it tight and use their big lads to punch holes through the fringes. Despite a few narrow escapes, we held out to half time Guy's 21-0 in front.

The half time team talk instilled the need for GHRFC to rise above the stupid antics of some of the opposition players and relive the superb rugby of the opening quarter. Unfortunately, for the second week in succession, the second half saw the floodgates

open. Guy's were immediately under the cosh, with the opposition's big men running hard at the fringes. Some missed tackles allowed Whitstable to score quickly. Luckily, they missed the conversion. However, that was only the beginning. Clean ball from a Whitstable scrum saw their No. 8 pick up to go blind. Breaking through the first tackle, he linked well with winger and back row, to score a second try, almost within two minutes of their opener. With a conversion added the game had now really begun. The balcony of home support now had something to cheer about, the referee's decision making came under particular spotlight. However, referee or not, the team in Blue and Gold found it increasingly difficult to keep the ball for more than two or three phases, and one step forward often led to two steps backwards. Whitstable then added a penalty, to bring them within one score of Guy's. A converted try for the home team would see them take the lead.

Fortunately, some semblance of composure came over the away side as they enjoyed some possession in the opposition half. Again, a Pod 1 move saw the ball carried over the line but again it could not be grounded! The five-metre scrum almost led to disaster. The ball spurted out of the back our scrum to be pounced upon by Whitstable. They ran almost the length of the field, only to be thwarted metres from our line.

With the clock running down, they were running short of time. Some lengthy kicking by Gretton, ensure that Whitstable were pinned back. When the referee's whistle went, a wave of relief washed over the Guy's team. Whitstable were visibly annoyed, but it was clear that Guy's were the better team on the day. Some underhand tactics by Whitstable was one of the main reasons they stayed in the game. How their 8 stayed on the park for the 80 mins is a mystery.

After gins for Rhys (first win) and Gurv (toilet break), the team dispersed with the winds to leave a small hard-core for the coach trip home.