

Kent 1 League Fixture at Honor Oak Park 29th October 2005

Guy's Hospital RFC 15 - 14 Whitstable RFC

After the thrilling victory two weeks previously at HOP, I did not think that a closer match would be seen in many years. However, the tense climax to this fixture was most astounding. With three minutes to go, Guy's trailed by 12-14. Following a period of intense pressure, the home side was awarded a penalty in a rather tricky position. No matter, for our new first year scrum half slotted the ball over in a most mature fashion. However, that was not the end as Whitstable surged forward in the final passages of play. With a ruck in the 22, the opposition number 10 slipped into the pocket but fortunately for Guy's, sent his dropped goal-drifting wide of the left hand upright. Victory for Guy's!

Whitstable made the lengthy foray into SE London as league leaders. Nevertheless, Guy's had fond memories of the two heavy triumphs of last season, and were desperate to make a recovery following of last weeks defeat away to Beccehamians. Rhys Davies, the Guy's captain drilled into his players before the match that this represented a pivotal moment of the season. If today's match was lost, we would have been defeated four times making promotion very difficult indeed.

With a strong team, buoyed by the availability of various final years and other past and present, Guy's dominated the early exchanges. In previous weeks, a point of concern has been the scrummage, but on this occasion, the weighty front row of Jeremy, Wheeler and Sheppard allowed the Guy's pack to dominate. Combined with efficient lineout ball, the back line and loose forwards had time and occasion to dominate. It was not long before a smart move in the centres sent the debutant Fresher ploughing through the opposition line. A loud call by Turner saw the ball offloaded to him who finished out wide with consummate style. The follow up was not converted.

Whitstable then showed why they were top of the table, as they fired large tight forwards at the fringes. Resolute tackling stopped them in their tracks but pressure told as the eventually crossed the whitewash for a converted try. The remainder of the half saw great battles in the midfield as both sides sought domination, without success. Throughout this period however, players from both sides became subject to the referee's attention.

In the second half, Whitstable crossed the line early on for another seven points. The official dispatched appeals of double movement. Guy's were now nine points adrift. A brief team talk again instilled the need for victory and the home team responded. Intelligent lines of running and accurate and lengthy punting forced Guy's up the field. Catches and drives from the lineout were defeated but the blue and gold three-quarters found space. A shortened lineout on the halfway line sent the backs flying. Quick recycled ball opened up holes for spirited backs. Scrum half Trotter made a break and offloaded in the tackle to Davies who seized the high ball and drove across under the posts. A conversion put Guy's within two points of the lead. By now, the adrenaline was certainly flowing for both players, spectators and referee. Interesting decisions punished the home team for dissent, and as a result saw a loss of

momentum. Fortunately, as stated above the home side eventually were awarded a penalty in a kickable position, and the rest, as they say is history.

It was a long while before the team came down off their high, and many thoughts of sympathy were felt for the former league leaders who travelled over two hours to lose by a single point.

Brockleians away in two weeks, superb.

Rhys Davies
Captain

Tries: Turner, Davies
Cons: Ampleforth (2)