

Monday 4th february 2008

OA's U9's Weekly News

OAs eager to impress Ealing RFC on Sunday 3rd February 2008

It was a pleasure to host visitors from Ealing RFC on another bright and cold winter's morning. Ealing are a big club with a formidable reputation - I was told that their As and Bs rarely lose to anyone! The games were played to a very high standard with our teams showing the visitors a thing or two. Our OAs under 9s dominated the morning with our teams winning 7 of the 11 games played. This is a fine achievement considering some of our players were missing through illness or participation in other events elsewhere. Congratulations to all the players and coaches.

Next week the Blues and Reds entertain an additional fixture with Tring A and Bs whilst the Yellows and Greens enjoy a hard earned chance to get some time on the training pitch.

As we hit two thirds of the way through the season it is a good time to pause and assess how well our players are doing this season.

I would like to congratulate 5 players with 100% attendance records for the season - **Zach West, Jonathan Powdrell, Adam Ford, Cameron Clark** and **Ethan Arpino**. I am also, however, delighted that 15 more players have almost perfect attendance of 95% and another 9 players have attended 90% of sessions. This means that across the age group around **half of the players have attended more than 90% of sessions** - this is a great achievement and relates to how our teams are managing to continually improve each week. The players are showing great loyalty and are learning that what they get out of their game comes from what they put into it!

In terms of games played, as a whole age group we have played 75 games against 13 clubs and won 50 of the games. The **Greens** have beaten all D squads and some C's they have played. The **Yellows** have beaten all D's, most C's and some B's. The **Reds** have beaten all D's, all C's, most B's and some A squads. The **Blues** are unbeaten so far over 20 games. This is a remarkable record and not many clubs can boast an age group with these results.

Lastly, across all squads we have scored 282 tries and conceded 153. The Blues have done particularly well having scored 120 tries and only conceded 8 - defence is the key!

These records show **how strong all our under 9 squads are** and how well the players and coaches are doing this season. Every player in every position and in every squad is improving and producing results to prove it. **Well done everybody.**

*Brian Clark
Head Coach*

Correction - in the last edition of the Weekly News the report on the Blues noted the participation of Charlie Moffatt in the games, but did not name him on the player's list. Sorry Charlie!

The Blues

The Blues had an extended run out for the first time this year against very good opposition from Ealing. With soccer and school commitments eating into all squads, we asked **Kane White** to help out the Reds leaving us with 12 players for the day. Thus a strict one player injured at a time policy was in effect.

Another issue causing me angst was the fact that the three missing players were all full or part time scrum half's. This meant there was a steep learning curve for **Simon Jones** and **Luke Simpson** who split the role on the day and performed very well.

OA Blues 15 v Ealing A 5

A very bright start from the Blues in the first game of the day saw an early score for **Captain Cameron Clark** on a trade mark solo run. Ealing were by far the best bunch of forwards we have faced all year and every ruck was a contest. Our forwards stood toe to toe in this game with **Ed Birchinnall** and **Archie Radovanovic** both putting a very strong game together.

Ealing did not really threaten our line due to a massive improvement to the soft tacking that we saw last week against Harpenden. Although not a part of the game that gets much focus in these reports every player took responsibility for tacking the player they were marking and **Captain Clark** organised the line to ensure we kept Ealing on the back foot.

In one passage of play **Archie Radovanovic** crushed an Ealing runner only to be absolutely pancaked when he took the turnover ball forward. The key throughout all the contact was the ball retention, only one loose pass all game and very few knock-ons and dropped balls was a sign of the high quality play the team was producing.

With the Blues winning the arm wrestle the difference was **Cameron Clark**, first to the tackle and ruck he also scored a hat-trick for good measure. At one point one of the Ealing coaches pushed a maul back away from touch onto the pitch to give his boys a boost. However, despite a late consolation score it was all one way traffic. Throw in the fact that we had two missed chances from knock-ons in the act of scoring and a really good result was in the bag

Try scorers - Cameron Clark (3)

OA Blues 15 v Ealing B 0

Much like Saracens, the B team from Ealing gave us a really good game. There is a trend for the Blues to beat an A squad and then relax against the B and C teams we play. Well in this game we were forced to play at a higher level by our opponents.

The forwards again had a hard battle and the athletic ability of **Ethan Arpino** was to the fore against a smaller but quicker team.

By this time **Simon Jones** was warming into the No 9 shirt and despite being under a deal of pressure he did a great job of keeping the ball moving, and when under pressure not once did he turn the ball over.

The clairvoyant among you will guess that **Cameron Clark** got us on the score board early with a darting run from a attacking scrum.

The team stepped up to the standard of the captain and all of them put in good passages of play. **Ed Birchinnall** was unlucky to be pushed into touch with the line at this mercy and **Luke Simpson** had his introduction to scrum half play.

An indication of the Blues dominance was two tries going to the forwards after long periods of play on the Ealing line with Archie touching down twice, once under a pile of bodies with the referee taking his time before awarding the score.

Try scorers - Cameron Clark, Archie Radovanovic (2)

OA Blues 15 v Ealing A 0

With a half hour break between games we ran the boys over for a round of hot chocolates in the club house. Suitably warmed up we returned for the re-match with the Ealing A team.

The Ealing coach told me after the first game that they normally start at 12 on a Sunday and so were not ready for our first game. With the clock approaching midday would the Blues loose their unbeaten record? Answer - NO!

This was another comprehensive victory over a tough Ealing team who put heart and soul into the contest - we actually lost more rucks than we won on our own ball however the tackling remained very sharp so our try line was not under any real threat.

The first score followed an outrageous dummy from **Cameron Clark** that had all of Ealing going right as he skipped to the left untouched to score.

The forwards were under the cosh but stuck at it, **Ed Birchinall** rounding off a good day with another strong performance.

Cameron Clark scored again to give us breathing space and was clean through for a third when he choose to pass the ball out to **Jonny Olive** on the wing, Jonny was so shocked to see this act of unselfish play that the ball was spilled and try went begging.

Not to be denied **Jonny Olive** got on the score sheet with one of this snake hipped runs to put us over the top.

All three games had some really big hits from both sides and Ealing had what could charitably be described as a 'chippy' scrum half that caused a bit of needle in both games. **Archie Radovanovic** responded to this by landing his full weight on top of the young man in a tackle (the combined weight of Posh Spice and Nicole Ritchie) and the Blues waved the warrior off the pitch as he was carried off on his shield.

A great day of Rugby from every boy as Big Blue rolls on.

Try scorers - Cameron Clark (2), Jonny Olive

Player of the week - Cameron Clark, Ed Birchinall, Simon Jones and Archie Radovanovic all played very well but **Archie Radovanovic** took the award for his individual performance and on behalf of all the forwards.

Report by Andrew Radovanovic

Coaches - **Andrew Radovanovic**, **Tim Birchinall** and **Steve Pope**

Players - Ethan Arpino, Ed Birchinall, Cameron Clark, Daniel Hanlon, Simon Jones, James Lear, Jonathan Olive, Robbie Pope, Archie Radovanovic, Luke Simpson, William Stewart.

On loan to the Reds - Kane White.

The Reds

A much depleted Reds took on our new visitors to Wollams from Ealing, West London. Despite the weakened squad and cold and blustery conditions the Reds emerged yet again with flying colours.

One of the targets I have set the Reds is to beat all other "B" squads and to ask questions of "A" squads. We achieved both again this week.

Two big thank you's first though - to **Kane White** who joined us from the Blues for the morning and to **Oliver Palmer** and **Harry Newman-Booth** who both "volunteered" to play for Ealing D in the final game.

OA Reds 10 v Ealing B 5

Game 1 against Ealing B started in terrific style with a try in the opening minute for **Zach West**, set up by storming run from **Oliver Palmer**. It looked as though we would stroll through the game, however Ealing responded strongly and equalised before half time. The second half saw Ealing camped on the Reds line and I believe 3 seven metre scrums were given for the ball being held up over the try line - fantastic defence. As so often happens, when we finally relieved the pressure the Reds snatched victory with a fine try from **Adam Ford**, who along with **James Clark** and **James Yurkwich**, was also in superb tackling form. The power of the Reds is coming to the fore now and if we can learn to control the ruck situation better we are going to be a very hard side to beat. (Apologies, but due to the illegibility of my notes I may have got the try scorers the wrong way round, though I know they both scored, please forgive me!)

Try scorers - Zach West, Adam Ford

OA Reds 0 v Ealing A 15

Game 2 against Ealing A was equally as tough and three sets of missed tackles led to three soft breakaway tries. The score was kept tight thanks to ferocious tackling from the whole team including **Ashling Larmer** on the wing. However, despite heroic efforts from **Toby Palmer** in his part time role as scrum half and **Ronan Harris** at fly half we just couldn't break through the Ealing defence. It was pleasing to hear from the Ealing coach at the end how well he thought the Reds had played and they weren't use to playing such a strong "B" team.

OA Reds 20 v Ealing D 0

Game 3 against Ealing D was more of a practice game though it was pleasing to see **Toby Palmer** and **James Clark** get well deserved tries along with **Ronan Harris** who has fitted in extremely well to the Reds squad. For Ealing **Oliver Palmer** and **Harry Newman-Booth** put in strong performances determined no doubt to get their own back on the coach for asking them to play for the opposition!

Try scorers - James Clark, Ronan Harris(2), Toby Palmer (Please correct me if I got the try scorers wrong in this game, my fingers had given up by then.)

To sum up Ealing are a strong club and to beat their B team and frighten their A team, without our team captain, our regular scrum half's and three of our backs was a fantastic effort. Well done again.

Player of the week - goes to **James Clark** for his trade mark tackling and bulldozing runs

Report by Rick Powdrell

Coaches - **Rick Powdrell** and **Guy Palmer**

Players - Zach West, Oliver Palmer, Ashling Larmer, Toby Palmer, Adam Ford, James Yurkwich, James Clark (Captain), Ronan Harris, Harry Newman-Booth , Kane White and very briefly Jonathan Powdrell.

The Yellows

A freezing cold morning at OA's didn't put the Yellow's off - and once again we were blessed with yet another great performance from the team! Following on from last week, the Yellows are really starting to gel.....Tackling was great and we are starting to pass the ball out to other guys better placed - still something we have to get even better at though.

OA Yellows 20 V Ealing Ds 0

Unfortunately Ealing could only field 6 players - this made for a 'strange' game, but the Yellows adapted well. Furthermore, due to an injured **Rory Jeram**, and an absent **Thomas Murphy** we had to alter our front row - fielding guys far less experienced in these positions. Nonetheless the Yellows once again proved their adaptability!

The Yellow's were determined from the offset to win this game, and demonstrated some great defence. Some great team work and fearsome running saw 4 tries for the Yellow's. However, that said, we could have scored yet more tries if we just passed the ball out more.....

Try scorers - Jake Moldecki, Euan Wattley, Jasper Williamson, John Greener.

OA Yellows 0 Vs Ealing As 20

As per last week's Harpenden A team game, the score line doesn't reflect another excellent performance by the Yellows. Ealing A's were much tougher opposition and the Yellows matched them in nearly all

aspects of the game. Whilst tries were elusive for the Yellows, it was not for want of trying, and they really did deserve to have scored some!

An injured **Rory Jeram**, once again, had to leave this game and retired for the rest.

OA Yellows 5 Vs Ealing Bs 15

As per last week, the score line flatters Ealing. Without the true front row - no Rory or Thomas, we then lost **Jack Rye** to injury during this game. The Yellow's still put out a fantastic performance.

Try scorer - Euan Wattley

Despite the perishing cold, this really was a great day of rugby and congratulations to each of the Yellow squad. You really are gelling very well, and putting much of what you have learned into practise.

There is no room for complacency, though, we've still got lots to work on and your coaches, as ever, look forward to the forthcoming strategy and skill sessions in the coming weeks.

Once again, we remind you that the one thing to work on, wherever possible, is fitness. One session of rugby a week must be supplemented by other activities that work on fitness during the week.

Special mention goes to **Euan Wattley**, who played his best games so far this season, and **Jasper Williamson** who was everywhere.

Player of the week - award goes to **Connor Mitchell** who demonstrated consistent and determined good play throughout all 3 games and week on week is getting better and better - well done Connor!

Report by Simon Mitchell & Dawn Sewell

Coaches - Dawn Sewell and Simon Mitchell

Players - Thomas Dee, Harry Deeks, John Greener, Paul Greener, Joseph Hensman, Rory Jeram, Connor Mitchell, Jake Mlodecki, Jack Rye, Edward Sewell, Euan Wattley, Jasper Williamson.

The Greens

A good turnout of players on a cold and windy morning enjoyed a brief training session before taking to the field for their first match of the morning.

OA s Greens 35 v Ealing D 10

Unfortunately Ealing could only raise half a dozen players and, therefore, it was agreed that a six- a-side match should be played with the Greens fielding a different side in each half.

The extra space created by the lack of players suited the Green's strong runners with **Angus Wight** (3) **Toby Spence** (2) and **Oscar Finnie** (1) all scoring excellent tries. Also on the score sheet was **Maxim Vuolo** who powered over from close range for his first try of the season. Unlucky not to score was **Conor Quinn** whose fine run from deep inside his own half was only stopped by an excellent last ditch Ealing tackle.

As with the previous week the Greens defended well with **Ryan Golds**, **Oliver Marshall**, **William Mackay** and **Ethan Piggott** prominent. Especially pleasing to your correspondent was the try saving tackle by **Joseph Wackett** with the match finely balanced at 10-5. Not so impressive was the over enthusiastic tackle resulting in the near decapitation of the Ealing winger and the award of a penalty try!

All in all, an excellent performance from both Green "teams".

Mention must be made of the Ealing team, playing without replacements, who must have been exhausted by the end of the game but never gave up.

Try scorers - Angus Wight (3), Toby Spence (2) Oscar Finnie, Maxim Vuolo

OAs Greens 5 v Ealing B 30

Against a well organised side the Greens found possession hard to come by, especially at the breakdown. The Ealing side's superiority at the ruck and maul coupled with the Greens tendency to be "sucked in" at such situations led to a lack of defensive cover and resultant scoring opportunities.

Again the Greens tackling was good with **Oliver Marshall**, **William Mackay** and **Luke Benfield** prominent.

Angus Wight was the Greens only scorer, with **Toby Spence** coming close after his excellent run was stopped by an excellent Ealing tackle.

Try scorer - Angus Wight

Again, there were definite improvements over the previous week's performances and the coaches must be extremely pleased with the progress made by the team as a result of their hard work.

Player of the Week - Ryan Golds

Report by Martin Wackett

Coaches - Jim Finnie, Mick Quinn and Stephen Barbour

Players - Luke Barbour, Angus Wight, Oscar Finnie, Maxim Vuolo, Ethan Piggott, Joseph Wackett, Ryan Golds, Andrew Doughty, Oliver Marshall, William Mackay, Conor Quinn, Luke Benfield, Toby Spence