

Monday 11th February 2008

OA's U9's Weekly News

OAs Yellows victorious at Verulamians whilst the Greens, Reds and Blues tame Tring RFC

on Sunday 10th February 2008

A complicated day passed on Sunday with the Yellows away at our St Albans neighbours, Verulamians RFC, for a last minute extra fixture whilst the other squads were at home to arch rivals Tring.

Our OAs under 9s pulled off another fabulous set of performances leading to some remarkable results - all our teams ended the day unbeaten over 9 games played. **Well done everybody.**

Next week we entertain teams from Watford and Hitchin for fixtures at home.

Brian Clark
Head Coach

The Blues

Of all the Hertfordshire A teams, Tring have always provided the hardest competition for the Blues and our last encounter with them was in an emotional losing effort in the Tring festival final last season. The coaches and organisers from Tring are a top bunch, but in a sporting context I was keen to have a crack at them again. This fixture would provide a great indication of where we are relative to our local rivals.

The answer is that we seem to be ahead of the pack, but we must continue to improve to stay ahead, a return match at Tring in their upcoming festival on their home ground will be a much bigger challenge.

OA Blues 5 v Tring A 0

The first game with the Men in Black became a one way affair with the Blues attacking almost exclusively after the first few minutes of tentative midfield ruck and counter ruck, during which it appeared that the teams might be very finely balanced.

What was notable was the quality tackling and defending by both sets of players, with **Cameron Clark** organising the line and the Bruise Brothers, **Ed Birchinall** and **Archie Radovanovic** putting in our big hits. Tring were going nowhere, but they in turn managed to snuff out most of our attacks.

The first half was marked with **Cameron Clark** making several penetrating runs to no effect as there was little support from his team-mates - the team work was not quite clicking and we could not finish off from some promising attacking positions.

Just before half time the Blues slipped into gear. Some strong running from **William Parkinson**; a ruck recycled quickly, the ball passed to **James Lear** on the wing; James gaining ground and presenting the ball back; all three forwards rucking over the ball; the scrum half digging the ball out and spinning it to **Cameron Clark**; Cameron, ball in both hands with support on his outside, kept the defenders guessing and took the open channel to score. A text book try and my favourite of the season so far!

The second half was pretty much one way traffic but some strong tackling from Tring kept us scoreless - a bit more precision and we would have moved away on the scoreboard. I was pleased to see **Charlie Moffatt** have a real impact in the centre throughout the second half.

I know I am banging the drum a bit but the tackling was very, very good in the game and three players showed a real improvement - **James Lear**, **Luke Simpson** and **Simon Jones** take a bow.

Try scorer - Cameron Clark

OA Blues 25 v Tring A 0

When the Blues play most B teams it is their chance to try some new combinations and planned moves. In contrast, however, the Tring A team seemed to enjoy their game against our Reds as much as a trip to the dentist!

With Tring suitably softened up the smart money was on another Blues victory and it didn't take long to get ahead. **Ed Birchinall** was having a great day and his strong running set the tone for an improved forward display. With the team going forward and **Ruiari McGowan** moving the ball quickly from ruck and re-start, it was not long before **Cameron Clark** crossed the line twice, sandwiching a good powerful close range try from **Archie Radovanovic**.

The game was still competitive and **William Stewart** had one of those days when he ended up at the bottom of every pile up and had to go off for the magic sponge a few times. Again **Charlie Moffatt** and **Luke Simpson** shut down the Tring attacks on their wing with good tackling and **James Lear** was having his best game of the season on the other wing.

The second half saw the return of **William Parkinson** to the score sheet, finishing off a good team move and a very well deserved score from **Ed Birchinall**, who was rewarded for his tireless efforts in attack and defence.

Tring had a powerful looking hooker on the pitch by this point, **Robbie Pope**, who was playing a cameo for our visitors, well done Robbie.

There was just time for Cameron Clark to put in a "YouTube special" tackle on a flying Tring winger drawing 'ooohs' from the crowd - "*Here comes the BOOM*".

Another fine day of rugby by the boys we call Blues.

Try scorers - Cameron Clark (2), Archie Radovanovic, William Parkinson, Ed Birchinall

Player of the week - again Cameron Clark was a candidate, along with Ed Birchinall however the award goes to **James Lear**. Involved, committed and powerful James put in his best two games of the season.

Report by Andrew Radovanovic

Coaches - Andrew Radovanovic, Tim Birchinall and Steve Pope

Players - Ethan Arpino, Ed Birchinall, Cameron Clark, Daniel Hanlon, Ruiari McGowan, Charlie Moffatt, William Parkinson, Robbie Pope, Archie Radovanovic, Luke Simpson, William Stewart, Simon Jones, Kane White, James Lear.

The Reds

This Sunday saw the return fixture against our great friends and rivals from Tring . Earlier in the season the Reds put in a couple of poor performances at Cow Lane to lose 30-0 to Tring A and struggle to beat Tring B 25-0 before improving greatly to narrowly lose a second encounter with Tring A 5- 0.

This return fixture would show what, if any, improvements the Reds have made.

OA Reds 50 v Tring B 0

In complete contrast to their previous encounter, the Reds started on fire and proved too hot to handle throughout this one-sided match. The pre-match practice on rush defence paid off and Tring were never allowed to settle as the Reds pressure forced numerous errors which were, bar none, capitalised on.

Two performances stood out - **Toby Palmer**, now settling in as a forward in the ilk of Jean Pierre Rives or Peter Winterbottom (ask your grand dads!), was a force at all breakdowns with a much improved tackling

game. His namesake **Oliver Palmer**, now playing at centre, added some strong running to his already bruising defence.

More pleasing was the positional play this week as the backs more often than not reformed their line quickly in readiness for attack or defence rather than lurking around the rucks and mauls.

Five tries in either half laid the platform for the match the Reds were waiting for - another crack at the talented Tring A side

Try scorers - Zach West , Adam Ford, Ronan Harris (2), James Clark, Caswell Sparks (2), Oliver Palmer (2) and Jonathan Powdrell

OA Reds 0 v Tring A 0

Nil - Nil = Boring . Never! This was a cracking match, the best of the season by a long way and probably the hardest match the Reds have played.

The pre-match talk was all positive and I sensed a real determination to perform well, having let ourselves down when at Tring.

Tring are an exceptionally strong side and it took a complete team effort to prevent their wave-after-wave of attack from breaking down our defence.

As I said to the team beforehand, the wingers have a crucial part to play in defence as well as attack and so it was great to see **Harry Newman-Booth**, **Ryan Owen** and **Jack Tahesh** tackling like forwards and ensuring no space down the flanks. The centre pairing of **Adam Ford** and **Oliver Marshall** were sensational, again with the rush defence being executed superbly to allow the Tring speedsters no time to cause any real threat.

The forwards, led by **James Clark**, **Jonathan Powdrell**, **Zach West** and **Toby Palmer** performed amazingly putting in a number of big hits and never relaxing. **Ronan Harris**, however, put in the tackle of the game with an amazing sliding tackle to prevent a Tring attack down the wing from penetrating our defence - just remember though we are suppose to be playing rugby not football !

On the final whistle the Reds collapsed with exhaustion and a great deal of satisfaction, each one of them having contributed to a great game. Although we didn't win, we softened the opposition up for the Blues to finish off - great teamwork!

It is difficult to express the pleasure performances like this give to a coach, but the sight of the smiles on the lads' faces and the applause from the touchline said it all.

We can take a lot from this game and can go forward with the belief that we can take on any opposition without fear.

Player of the week - At the end I was badgered into awarding a player of the week award. My first reaction was not to give one as this really was a team effort. However, as usual, the kids get their own way - its sometimes easier. So for two fantastic displays in relatively new positions the award was shared between **Toby Palmer** and **Oliver Palmer**.

Finally a big thank you for the referees for the day, especially Matthew Moffatt and the support of the parents.

Can't wait for the next match!

Correction to last weeks report - in the match against Ealing C, Oliver Palmer scored 1 try and Ronan Harris 1 try (not 2 as previously stated).

Correction to fixture list - we are now entering the Reds into the Tring festival on 16th March and not the Marlow festival. Please ensure all players are available that day as it is a strong festival and we will need a full squad

Report by Rick Powdrell

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

Players - Zach West, Oliver Palmer, Toby Palmer, Adam Ford, James Clark, Ronan Harris, Harry Newman-Booth, Jonathan Powdrell (captain), Caswell Sparks, Jack Tahesh, Ryan Owen and

The Yellows

The Yellow's squad continue to impress their parents, coaches and each other.

Turning up against local rivals at Verulamian's (*Editor's note* - they seem to have dropped the "Old" bit) the Yellows were a little surprised to find Vs fielding not one, but two sides. It was not the best situation to be in, especially considering the Yellows were down four key players to various types of half term holiday!

Vs A 10 v OA Yellows 10

So the squad of 11 Yellows began with some trepidation against the Vs A team.

Determined tackling and good offloading saw an evenly contested game finish in a deserved draw. **Connor Mitchell** and **Rory Jeram** scored well worked tries.

Try scorers - Connor Mitchell, Rory Jeram

Vs B 0 v OA Yellows 45

The second game against Vs Bs was a different story as the Yellows aggressive defence and determined attitude completely shut Vs out.

A highlight was the super rucking which saw at least two turnovers.

Try scorers - John Greener (2), Euan Watley (2), Edward Sewell, Jack Rye, Connor Mitchell, Harry Deeks, Matthew Ellis

Vs A 0 v OA Yellows 10

A hastily arranged third game was, for the Yellows' coaches, a slight risk given that the chaps had played all day with a squad of 11 - but as they say, fortune favours the brave. Two or three of the better Vs boys were drafted into their A squad to further bolster the Vs premier team which resulted in the Yellows being given the most difficult test of the day.

The determination that was evident from all gave Vs problems from the off. Aggressive defence, quick reactions and super attacks saw the Yellows finish with their finest display of the day.

Try scorers - Euan Watley (2)

Each and every member of the team had a great day and your coaches and parents are very proud of you. Mentioning every player who did well is not helpful in highlighting those that played exceptionally, so you will understand if just a few young men are mentioned. Several boys played out of their socks and deserve special attention. **Edward Sewell** played 5 halves of great scrum half rugby and tackled very well. **Jack Rye** competed in every phase and was instrumental in the win. **John** and **Paul Greener** played with immense determination and no little skill and without their efforts the score would have been very different.

Player of the week - goes to **Euan Wattle** who as well as tacking like a demon ensured he got the ball to instigate numerous attacks and finish most. Euan finished the day with four tries.

A post match celebration at McDonalds London Colney capped off a fine day.

Report by Simon Mitchell & Dawn Sewell

Coaches - Dawn Sewell and Simon Mitchell

Players - Thomas Dee, Harry Deeks, Matthew Ellis, John Greener, Paul Greener, Rory Jeram, Connor Mitchell, Joshua Montoya-Timperley, Jack Rye, Edward Sewell, Eاون Wattleby,.

The Greens

The Greens were expecting a quiet morning of training to work on those areas needing improvement. However, much to their surprise Head Coach Clark called them into action to take on the Tring B team over 2 games.

OA Greens 25 v Tring B 15

The Greens got off to an excellent start courtesy of a first minute try from **Toby Spence** with a fine run from inside his own half. More of the same followed with Tring struggling to cope with **Toby Spence's** pace and elusive running. Two further tries followed to give him his hat - trick before half-time.

Unfortunately for the Greens, Tring also had strong runners who took advantage of some missed tackles to peg back the Greens and finish the first half on equal terms at 15-15.

After the break both teams improved defensively and tries became much harder to come by. Prominent in the tackling department for the Greens were **Ryan Golds, Joseph Wackett, William Mackay & Oliver Marshall**. Most outstanding was the tremendous tackle by **Andrew Doughty** on a Tring player who had crossed the try line and was about to touch down. Such was the force of the tackle that the Tring player knocked on and a certain try was averted.

Good running and support play from **Ryan Doherty, Oscar Finnie, Ethan Piggott, Luke Barbour** and **Luke Benfield** eventually led to a maul close to the Tring line. Quick ball enabled Joseph Wackett to scoot round the Tring defence to touch down. Another great individual try from Toby Spence wrapped up proceedings to give the Greens a hard fought 25-15 victory.

Try scorers - Toby Spence (4), Joseph Wackett

OA Greens 5 v Tring B 5

There was time for a further short game which picked up where the first match left off with defences on top. However this did not prevent **Toby Spence** from scoring another excellent try.

Try scorer - Toby Spence

To sum up, an extremely enjoyable morning's rugby provided by two well matched teams who played with great heart and commitment.

The coaches must be extremely satisfied and the team can look forward to this weekend's fixtures against Hitchin and Watford with confidence.

Player of the Week - **Toby Spence** who attacked and tackled very well, throwing everything he had into the game.

Report by Martin Wackett

Coaches - Jim Finnie, Mick Quinn and Stephen Barbour

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