

Monday 16th April 2007

OA's U8's Weekly News

OAs Under 8s Yellows Plate Runners-Up at the Bedford Festival on Sunday 22nd April 2007

This week we had two teams, **Yellows** and **Blues** competing in the **Bedford Festival**, hosted by Bedford Blues at Bedford Athletic RFC. This was the final event of the season which, coming close on the back of the Hertfordshire Festival the previous week, was a tall order to turn out teams in our age group's last attempt to secure some final trophies for our collection.

The quality of the rugby was high and OAs Under 8s accounted for themselves very well as ever. However, **the day belonged to the Yellows, who were runners up in their group and narrowly beaten in the Plate final by Old Scouts** (Northampton), who had eliminated the Blues earlier in the day. **Congratulations to the Yellows on their successes and ending their season on a high.**

Well done and thanks to all who turned out to represent the club and our age group at this event. Thanks also to the coaches (Dawn Sewell, Matthew Moffatt, Rick Powdrell) for leading the teams and helping me lead my team, and to the parents and helpers who all helped look after the teams and provided such vocal and visible support.

Brian Clark

The Yellows

What a day for the Yellows!!! And what a way to end their season.....This was, indeed, a hard festival for the Yellows as they faced very strong competition – being drawn against A and B teams of other clubs. But how they triumphed!

The Yellows playing at this festival were *Harry Newman-Booth, Rory Superfine, Connor Mitchell, Edward Sewell, John Greener, Paul Greener, James Clark, Kane White, Jasper Williamson and Zach West.*

The Yellows also played host to 2 guests from the Greens – *Matthew Ellis and Connor Quinn* - who both slotted in extremely well. Well done boys.

OA'S Yellows 8 V Bedford Blues B 3

The Yellows were slow to get started and only just managed to end the first half with a 3-3 draw. After an inspirational team talk, they came back onto the pitch fired up to take the lead which they held to go on to win 8 tries to 5 against the B team of the host club. Excellent team spirit enabled tries to be scored and numerous tags to be taken. The Yellows were warming up to become a formidable force!

Try scorers: *Rory Superfine 4, John Greener 2, Kane White 1, James Clark 1*

OA'S Yellows 2 v Olney 6

After a fantastic start to the festival, a strange thing happened! The second game was lost due to numerous missed tags, as Olney ran in try after try running past four or five OAs defenders. The heads of the Yellows began to drop. The strange thing was that the more tags they missed, the worse they got. No matter how much encouragement came from both Dawn Sewell (who was sporting a yellow vest to avoid being mistaken for being "on the game" - *Editor*) and Matthew Moffatt behind the try line, they could not get a tag!!! The end of the match could not come soon enough, the final whistle blew and their heads were down. What would happen in the third and final group stage match?

Try scorer: *James Clark 2*

OA'S Yellows 5 v High Wycombe B 3

Following a good break and a long encouraging conversation with both coaches, out they came and this time it was different! Tags were grabbed with aggression and turn-over ball was secured, passes made and tries scored. The most notable try scorer was **Rory Superfine**, who had his best day ever in an OA's shirt. However, do not take anything away from the whole team - everyone played a part in that well earned victory!! Some good running and support-play ensured a well earned victory and a passage into the Plate Final.

Try scorers: *Rory Superfine 3, Paul Greener 1, James Clark 1*

PLATE FINAL - OA'S Yellows 5 v Old Scouts 8

The Plate Final was against The Old Scouts of Northampton (or was it Old Spice!!!!) After an introduction by the referee, the whole team was left in no doubt that he was going to be in charge!!! Shirts were tucked in, tags were placed on the side of their belts and off they went into an exciting end-to-end match. With some straight running from **James Clark** and some pirouetting from **Rory Superfine** tries were scored (*Editors note* – its surprising that this referee in particular did not penalise Rory for this illegal "radical spinning", but it just goes to show how this referee was a law unto himself!)

However, sadly, the Old Scouts did manage to score a few more tries than the Yellows and the game was over in a flash. Despite their loss, this had been the Yellows day – they played magnificently and should be VERY proud of themselves, as we OA's are all proud of their achievement. Come on The Yellows!!!!

Try scorers: *Rory Superfine 4, James Clark 1*

This was a great team effort on behalf of every player who was in the team. They all played well and all the boys, parents, and coaches had enjoyed a great day out.

Report by Matthew Moffat & Dawn Sewell

The Blues

Perhaps a festival too far for the Blues, who performed well without quite reaching their traditional standards, particularly in defence. However Blues' traditions were maintained elsewhere in the overall team with: 1) an excellent effort by the parents to raise the gazebo, put the sides on back to front and look on anxiously as the wind picked up just as it became apparent that all the pegs were with the other gazebo elsewhere; and, 2) Mick Hanlon picking up the baton carried so spectacularly by previous Blues' fathers, including this reporter, to spend the day sitting nursing a "Serious Russell", gusting to a "Really Serious Russell" when food was near.

The Blues were below full strength, but were reinforced by two Reds who made excellent guest appearances with us. Well done to Toby and James for their high quality debuts with the Blues! The whole squad consisted of *Toby Palmer, James Lear, Cameron Clark, Daniel Hanlon, Charlie Moffatt, William Parkinson, Jonathan Powdrell, Archie Radovanovic, Luke Simpson and William Stewart.*

OAs Blues v Bedford Blues (10 – 6)

An interesting first game, which might have been an indication of the way things were going to go for the Blues. A strong showing by the Blues saw them, despite some interesting refereeing interpretations, winning easily – or so we thought. Making his debut as Statto for the Blues, ably supported by a bevy of glamorous assistants, was **Ian Lear**. They recorded the game as a 12 – 6 win in favour of the Blues, but the referee originally scored it 9 – 6 before submitting it to the festival control tent as 10 – 6! Much head-shaking by all concerned both on and off the pitch.

Jonathan Powdrell stepped up to the defensive duties to lead the tagging and **William Stewart** ran in 4 tries to head the scoring, but with just about everybody at least getting on the *unofficial* score sheet.

OAs Blues v High Wycombe (7 – 3)

This was a reasonably comfortable win, but again the Statto Dream Team recorded it as 8 – 3 only to discover that the referee claimed it to be 7 – 3. It was a different referee this time, but one that we were going to come to “love” as the festival wore on. **Cameron Clark** defended strongly in the game despite feeling under the weather (with what might be termed a “Mini Russell”) and **James Lear** ran in two good tries to lead the scoring – a fine effort on his debut with the Blues. Once again the tries were spread nicely around the team, an indication that they were moving the ball around a lot and changing the shape of the attack frequently.

OAs Blues v Tring (4 – 4)

As ever, of course, this was the game that mattered. The tension rose noticeably as the game approached, and only got worse when Tring leapt out to an early 2 try lead. The Blue team dug in as the support got more vocal and the referee, who had only been getting into his stride in the previous game, really got stuck into his job. Official turnover followed official turnover and the Blues definitely began to register confusion and started to hesitate rather than play at full speed. However, they stuck to their task and once again demonstrated their ability to pull out a result when all seemed lost. **James Lear** led the tagging this time and the four tries were shared around amongst **Daniel Hanlon**, **Luke Simpson**, **Archie Radovanovic** and **Jonathan Powdrell**. Never in front, the Blues hung on in there and when the final whistle went and the draw was secured, there were massive sighs of relief on the touchline from both the OAs and the Tring supporters. Naturally there were worries as the Blues scorers had recorded it as a draw, but on this occasion the referee agreed with them.

*[A little postscript to the match - Video evidence has been checked and despite the use of all technology available, it would seem that the ball was touched down by **Charlie Moffatt** before the try line (not that there was a line to speak of) and that the referee was correct this once. Where was a Russian linesman (or even a 6' 5" policeman without a Serious Russell) when one was needed?]*

OAs Blues v Old Scouts (6 – 7)

And so to the last group stage game against Old Scouts. This was a new opposition team for the Blues, but one that had looked very strong and had also drawn with Tring. They also possessed one particular player who could yet match Oliver from Tring as the Blues' most dangerous opponent, who excelled at taking the pass at speed and racing through the Blues' defence before they could react. He could even gurn with the finest gurners in the world of under 8 rugby – yes he was that good. And this time even the Blues couldn't hold off a very determined team, with their defence a little off it's usual best and their attack blunted by strong tagging from the opposition and increasing hesitancy in all phases of their game as the referee pinged both sides for a number of offences. **James Lear** led the tagging again and it was **Cameron Clark's** turn to lead the try scorers with 3 tries. **Charlie Moffatt** crossed the line to

take the scores level with hardly any time left but from the restart a very rapid move (20 seconds from Charlie touching down to the opposition scoring!) saw the Old Scouts star burst through to break the hearts of the Blues who had no time to respond.

[*Once again, a postscript.* In what is clearly going to be the last performance from the cameraman, who will be sacked for failing to prove what was obvious to any diehard Blues supporter on the touch-line, in all available video evidence **Cameron Clark's** tags in that run to the try line do appear to be a little more "up-front" than this particular ref, particularly when the opposition coach was helping, was ever going to allow.....]

So a shame, perhaps, that the Blues didn't sign off with a festival win but what a fantastic season they've had, winning the one that really mattered. They should look back with enormous pride on all they've achieved. And anybody who thinks sport is just about taking part should have seen the faces of a number of players when they lost, even though the stated aim for the day, quite rightly, was to have fun rather than win this particular event. The Blues definitely have a lot more fun when they win....

Summary of the Tries: James Lear - 4, Cameron Clark – 6, Daniel Hanlon – 3, Charlie Moffatt – 2, William Parkinson – 2, Jonathan Powdrell – 2, Archie Radovanovic – 3, Luke Simpson – 3, William Stewart – 5.

Summary of the Tags (*the official scorers, including Paul Simpson by the end, would like it to be known that there may be quite a few tags missing from this record due to the tensions of the last two games*): James Lear - 22, Toby Palmer - 8, Cameron Clark – 21, Daniel Hanlon – 5, Charlie Moffatt – 3, William Parkinson – 9, Jonathan Powdrell – 17, Archie Radovanovic – 11, Luke Simpson – 9, William Stewart – 22.

Report by Andrew Stewart