

Monday 2nd April 2007

OA's U8's Weekly News

OAs Out Shine Local Rivals Harpenden on Sunday 1st April 2007

This week we had all four teams, visiting our local rivals in Harpenden. This was our last fixture before the Herefordshire County Tag Rugby festival in a few weeks time.

Lastly, let's not forget to thank our hosts at Harpenden for running a good morning of fixtures.

The Blues

April Fools Day saw OA's away to their local rivals Harpenden on a sunny but chilly day. It was the Blues second fixture of the weekend after a couple of very comfortable wins the day before against Shelford in an exhibition match before the OAs 1st XV's final game of the season.

The Blues won all 3 of their matches comfortably and so retain local bragging rights (very useful for both the boys and the parents!) but it's important to remember that Harpenden were a long way short of full strength. These are not the teams we will see at the County festival.

Well done to Graham Olive for keeping the statistics this week, virtually single-handedly due to his oppo suffering what is known in Blues circles as a Serious Russell.

OA Blues 9 v Harpenden A 7

Harpenden A's only had a squad of 6 today and so borrowed a player in each game, leaving parents worried whether their boys might be tempted by the **Dark Side**. **Cameron Clark** took the first stint, but it's fair to say he played within himself!

The Blues scoring machine was in good working order, however, the defence wasn't always so hot. In particular the Blues' now worryingly traditional slow start saw Harpenden score relatively easily in the first half in particular – maybe they should play a full game of tag against somebody on the morning of the County festival before it gets underway!

The highlights of the game included great passes from **Luke Simpson** and **Archie Radovanovic** that led directly to scores. Indeed, there were a lot of great moves with some good passing that on another day would have led to a great many more scores. Other highlights for the crowd included Coach Clark whispering instructions to **William Parkinson** at a restart to go left and then watching William go immediately right – maybe the coach intended exactly that and used a bit of reverse psychology? If that is the trick then perhaps he might encourage them

to run sideways more or to run into touch..... **Luke Simpson** also put in a strong tagging display and was clearly relishing his role as flanker today.

Match Statistics: Ethan Arpino - 3 tags; Cameron Clark laughed in the face of the Dark Side (not something this reporter ever thought he would write about Cameron), Daniel Hanlon - 1 try, 1 tag; Ruairi McGowan - 2 tags; Johnny Olive - 2 tries, 6 tags; William Parkinson - 3 tags; Archie Radovanovic - 2 tries, 3 tags; Luke Simpson - 1 try, 11 tags; William Stewart - 3 tries, 4 tags.

OA Blues 11v Harpenden B 6

A very strong scoring performance again against a big physical team – some of these guys look like they will be in the Harpenden first team next year and will take some tackling. Fair play to **William Stewart** for standing his ground when the big lads were running at him (not everybody showed such courage/stupidity and it bodes well for his continuing role as fullback – just don't tell his Mum!). Highlights included a miraculous return to form by **Cameron Clark**, restored to the Blues and running in 5 tries! The referee was hugely tempted to tag Cameron himself during the last run as Cameron dummied for show – nobody was anywhere near Cameron at the time – but, despite allegiances to the Dark Side and the fact that it would have been very funny, he resisted that temptation. **Daniel Hanlon** missed out on the try feast as he took his turn to play for Harpenden's A team (although he did score 3 of Harpenden's 6 tries).

But the stats reveal a curious approach to tagging, with the total number of tags by the entire team only just exceeding Luke Simpson's individual effort in the previous game. All a bit odd, but then the game itself was a little odd with the Harpenden players showing signs of mutiny against their coaches and even resorting to wrestling with each other in disputes over who would take the restarts – surely such things wouldn't happen in the Blues.....

Match Statistics: Ethan Arpino - 1 try, 1 tag; Cameron Clark - 5 tries, 3 tags, Daniel Hanlon - Possibly tempted by the Dark Side but nobody was watching; Ruairi McGowan - 1 tag; Johnny Olive - 2 tries, 1 tag; William Parkinson – 1 try, 1 tag; Archie Radovanovic 1 tag; Luke Simpson - 1 tag; William Stewart - 2 tries, 3 tags.

OA Blues 8 v Harpenden A 4

By now Harpenden A's were beginning to wilt and the Blues dominated this game, taking an early and large lead and never looking back. They tagged well with standout performances from **Luke Simpson** and **Jonathan Olive** and again had some great passing moves which, but for the odd dropped or forward pass, would have led to an even higher score. **Ruairi McGowan** put in great attacking work and was the highest try scorer. It was **Archie Radovanovic's** turn to join the opposition and showed commendable fairness in trying really hard, often taking the ball from the restart, something Cameron Clark had seemed uncharacteristically reluctant to do in the first game. Well done Archie. You will be fined heavily of course but well done all the same.

Match Statistics: Ethan Arpino - 3 tags; Cameron Clark 1 try, 8 tags; Daniel Hanlon - 1 tag; Ruairi McGowan - 3 tries, 6 tags; Johnny Olive - 1 try, 17 tags; William Parkinson - 2 tries, 2 tags; Archie Radovanovic - Lord Vader; Luke Simpson - 1 try, 14 tags; William Stewart - 3 tags.

Top tagger for the week goes to **Luke Simpson**, just pipping **Jonathan Olive** but between them they defended really well. **Top attacker** could have gone to any number of players as the team attacked well as a unit but **Cameron Clark** gets it for being joint top scorer despite only playing in two games! This reporter did think about deducting at least one try from Cameron's aggregate for scoring against the Blues but decided that as he could have scored a hatful against them but "failed" to do so then that would have been a bit unfair!

Report by Andrew Stewart

The Reds

Sadly the Reds were having an off-morning and lost both the matches they played against Harpenden. They were missing 5 of the squad and a coach due to holidays and were obviously still suffering the delayed effects of the very successful and long day last week at Marlow.

Chin up guys and lets rest up/focus on The Herts County Tag Festival on the 15th April!

Report by Brian Clark

The Yellows

April the 1st!!!! Not for The Mighty Yellows!!!

What a morning we had at Harpenden.....Simon and Dawn are so very, very proud of the boys!! The Yellows have really progressed very well during this season and could quite well give most teams a run for their money...!! Infact, Mark (Harpenden coach) commented on how well our boys played and asked were we sure that they were the 'C's'.....!!!!!! All makes for an interesting Herts Festival....

The boys worked very well together as a team, defeating the Harpenden C's easily - infact we had to call time a little earlier than normal (as per the rule book) so as not to demoralise Harpenden.....:-

OA Yellows 9 Vs Harpenden C 2

Try scorers:- Harry Newman-Booth - 4, John Greener - 1, Zach West - 1, Kane White - 1, Caswell Sparks - 1, Paul Greener - 1

We took a little more time to warm up during the next game, but rose to the challenge....

OA Yellows 9 Vs Harpenden B 8

Try scorers:- Harry Newman-Booth - 3, John Greener - 2, Kane White - 1, Caswell Sparks - 2, Ryan Owen - 1.

Whilst the boys did fantastically well, as a team, we mustn't become complacent before the Herts Festival.....we have still got to work hard on our tagging!! Nonetheless, what a great bunch of boys and what fantastic team spirit they displayed at Harpenden!!

Well done The Yellows!!!!

Report by Dawn Sewell and Simon Mitchell

The Greens

The Green Machine was back in action with two games against Harpenden C. The warm up did not fill me with confidence but, like the true pro's they are, at game time they flicked the switch and it was all business.

Greens 8 - Harpenden C 6

Two games against Harpenden C were on the menu on the sun baked turf. The games were split and both very close, with two evenly matched sets of boys and girls. In this first game one the Greens showed some good organisation in defence and was able to get the upper hand on the score board. This was mainly down to the running of **Matthew Ellis**, who did not run out of bounds at all in either game, and scored his usual haul of eye catching tries. Matthew also made a big effort in tagging which is a good development in his game. A decision was made to limited Matthew taking the restarts as we know he what he can do and the coach wanted to see the other players come into the game more - I want to thank Matthew for accepting the reasons for this and playing a role for the team.

The main beneficiary of this was Matthew's partner in the centre **Tom Dee** who chipped in with some tries and, more importantly to yours truly, also kept the defensive shape and grabbed a lot of tags. The third musketeer in the middle, **Tom Murphy** led the way in tagging. The pacey back line of **Oscar Finnie**, **Ashling Larmer** and **Rhys Williams** all got on the score sheet and

showed a lot of initiative by swapping positions to create overlaps. Rhys occasionally got lost on the pitch and probably went to bed with the word " Rhys, Wing!!!" ringing in his ears.

Special mention to **Oscar Finnie** who took a tumble and after a quick magic sponge from his dad came back on to help out his teammates. The same commitment was shown by attack captain **Rory Jerum** who after falling on his knee told me he couldn't run because of the pain - I asked him to walk over to his mum for some TLC, at which point he sprinted off the pitch as fast as he's ever run!. The big man came back on to help seal the win over a very fast but very small Harpenden side.

Greens 8 - Harpenden C 10

The scores were reversed in the return leg for two reasons - first they scored more tries than us, but more importantly the Greens were complacent after match 1. The comments coming from the team before the match were guaranteed to see them come a cropper - as the England soccer team show us every game - there is no such thing as an easy fixture. The first half saw Harpenden leap to a 3 try lead and it took a while for the Greens to pull it around. Again the load was spread with **Matthew Ellis** helping me out by playing a team role and this allowed the crowd to enjoy the site of **Ashling Larmer** in full flight as she led the charge for the Greens in the second half.

The team really stepped up after the break and two things deserve a mention – first, all the team started to play soft, accurate short passes that allowed us to keep moves alive. As this is the most common pass in all forms of rugby it bodes well for the future. **Tom Dee** made this old man happy by really improving his passing throughout the games. We were close, but could not close the gap on Harpenden - the end of the game was the **Rory Jerum** show as he revealed a side step, a change of pace and a hat trick of tries. Jason Robinson watch out!

Report by Andrew Radovanovic