

Monday 19th November 2007

OA's U9's Weekly News

U9's Successful in their derby matches versus last season's County Tag Festival finalists - Hertford RFC on Sunday 18th November 2007

With the success of the Yellows and Greens at Hertford last week, they elected to stay at home and build upon their successes with some time on the training pitch. This left the field open for the Blues and Reds to travel and take on the stronger Hertford teams. Hertford, one of the most successful clubs in this county, have always provided worthy opposition in our age group and were the finalists overcome by the Blues in a thrilling game in last season's County Tag Festival Cup. Therefore, we expected a real test for the Blues and Reds this week. Both squads emerged victorious following an excellent display of team rugby by both squads. Well done and thanks to all players who turned out to represent the club and our age group.

Thanks, as ever, to all the coaches (both home and away) for looking after the teams and to Matthew Moffatt for his refereeing in Hertford.

Brian Clark, Editor

The OA Blues

Wow - what a performance at Hertford today. I am sure the parents are as proud of the boys as I am - excellent stuff all day. First, thanks to **Daniel Hanlon** who despite being under the weather gave us a game and a half of commitment before he had to retire - thank you Daniel.

One reason we are doing so well this year is we have the **Reds** to train and play with and their own high standard keeps the Blues on their toes. **Ed Birchinell** from the Reds helped us out in the forwards today was a stand out performer - well done Ed. On any other day he would have been player of the day, however, **Cameron Clark** put in a display that was simply outstanding all day and he was the well deserved winner of that award.

OA Blues 15 Hertford Wombats 0

A big Hertford side took the pitch for game one and the tone for the day was set by **Cameron Clark**, who cut their big strike runner in half from the start. I may put video of Cameron's tackles today on YouTube accompanied by some rap or heavy rock music - it was highlight stuff all day from him in that department.

This game saw our front three of **Ethan Arpino**, **Ed Birchinall** and **James Lear** play well as a team and give the Blues an attacking platform that allowed us to move away from Hertford on the score sheet as the day wore on. A big part of this was **Charlie Moffatt** playing his role from scrum half perfectly.

Daniel Hanlon was fighting illness and during the second half was "clothes lined" by a Hertford player. Yet to his great credit Daniel came back into the team in the next game before we had to ask him to rest. The ball was getting out to the wing more as the game went on and although we had two scores from **Cameron Clark** and one from **James Lear** in the forwards we were unlucky on a few occasions close to the Hertford line.

Try Scorers - Cameron Clark (2), James Lear

OA Blues 45 Hertford Wallabies 5

It was hard to tell at this point, but what looked like a Hertford B team greeted us for game two. The forwards changed for this game, but again the standard in this crucial part of the game was high. **Kane White** played a stormer and also scored a try. **Robbie Pope** was hitting the rucks with intent and we took the chance to give Cameron Clark a rest. **William Parkinson** stepped into fly half and did a very good impression of the great man by running the show and grabbing a hat-trick of tries. **Jonny Olive** may be the only utility wing/prop in world rugby and was excellent in both positions all day. In this game it was his work upfront that was a big plus. The one sided nature of the game saw the Blues go through the gears and **Simon Jones** and **William Stewart** were linking play nicely in the centre. Also having a good day at the office was **Ruairi McGowan** who spotted the gap and scored a blueprint scrum half's try and also kept the ball moving quickly from the ruck.

Try Scorers - Ruairi McGowan, Jonny Olive (2), William Parkinson (3), Ed Birchinall, Kane White, James Lear

OA Blues 15 Hertford A 5

A Hertford dream team, picked from the better players of their first two squads, gave us our closest game of the day. An example of statistics being deceptive relates to **William Stewart's** performance - although he did not score any tries on the day, William was at his best with linking play from the centre, joining rucks when needed and understanding that the ball can travel faster than legs can. The game was poised at 5 all at half time and I think Hertford were giving us all they had at this point. The Blues had the upper hand but were just failing to finish off moves as **Jonny Olive** went close a couple of times and **James Lear** also nearly get over the try line. As our forward play was so strong all day, we were never likely to loose but where was the inspiration for the win? Step forward **Cameron Clark** - two individual tries on sheer determination and all with a dodgy thigh muscle. From a far this looked like individual excellence, and indeed it was, but it was also the product of the pressure created by a team who were tackling and able to get quick ruck ball to put our captain into the position to win us the game.

A special note has to be made about **Luke Simpson's** try-saving tackle during the tight first half - as the Hertford player was sprinting away with nothing but grass to stop him, Luke left his wing, chased back 40 meters and tackled him on the line, setting up a ruck from which we won the ball. Beautiful!

Try Scorers - Cameron Clark 2, William Parkinson

OA Blues 30 Hertford A 0

On the rare occasions the Blues lost last year it was preceded by moans about being cold and tired, so I did fear the worst when the boys were looking a bit glum about the rematch. However they went from a group of sad 8 and 9 year olds to the 1996 All Blacks as soon as they stepped on the pitch. The most pleasing thing for me was that **Cameron Clark**, although having another great game, did not stand out too far as everyone else was also at their peak.

Jonny Olive slipped seamlessly from prop to wing and somehow this snake hipped speedster seems to be as hard to tackle in contact as he was in tag. His moves gave us some scores and breathing space to express ourselves. Some really nice team tries were built on the forward play and the interaction of the backs. **Luke Simpson** was rewarded with a score for his good play and the whole squad played at a level that I would love them to maintain - boy was it good.

Try Scorers - Cameron Clark, Ruairi McGowan, Jonny Olive (2), William Parkinson, Luke Simpson

Player of the Day - **Cameron Clark**

Report by Andrew Radovanovic

Coaches - **Andrew Radovanovic** and **Steve Pope**

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

Injured - **Archie Radovanovic**

OA Reds

I'm sure all present will agree that Sunday at Hertford was another hectic and full morning of rugby with yet another hugely successful outcome. Congratulations to all who survived the onset of winter, both players and parents alike (and coaches) though once again the rugby (all 5 games!) was a treat to watch.

OA Reds 25 Hertford Wallabies 0

The first game was highlighted by a classic scrum half display from **Caswell Sparks** (one wallaby George Gregan would have been proud of). Caswell, who with constant sniping from the back the scrum, scored 4 tries. Not to be outdone, our powerhouse forward **James Clark** steamrolled in for another. The forward play in general was very strong giving the backs the platform to attack, though again our speed to the rucks is one area to concentrate on in training. The tackle count from both half backs **Caswell Sparks** and **Rory Superfine** was immense and was supplemented by some strong runs from **Jack Tahesh** and **Finlay Cripps**. All in all, a fine start to the morning.

Try Scorers - Caswell Sparks (4), James Clark 1

OA Reds 10 Hertford Wombats 5

The Wombats proved to be the toughest test of the morning, frustratingly so in my opinion as with a little more composure and less attraction of the backs to the mauls, we should have won more comfortably. The lack of discipline in the backs' positioning was highlighted by the Wombats try, which came from an unopposed breakaway from a maul in which all 9 of our team were involved! Where was the defence? Again, strong tackling from **Jonathan Powdrell** and **James Clark** in the forwards and **Rory Superfine, Adam Ford** and **Toby Palmer** in the backs laid the foundation for the victory with **Caswell Sparks** and **Harry Newman-Booth** nipping in to score the tries.

Try Scorers - Caswell Sparks, Harry Newman Booth

OA Reds 30 Hertford Pumas 5

Having seen off our antipodean opposition it was now the turn of the South Americans. However, unlike the recent world cup they proved to be a walkover with the referee having to stop the game early to prevent further humiliation. Both half backs again made full use of the lack of an opposition defence and ran in 3 tries each, largely unopposed. Perhaps in future they may pass the ball to their team mates to share the tries around!

The main feature of this game, though, was the first **red card** of the season and in fact of my time as coach of the Reds. For those who were unsure, the Hertford player was sent off for illegal use of the boot. It was pleasing to see the home referee stamping (no pun intended) down on this and as a redeeming touch the Hertford player made an apology to the Reds at the end of the game.

Try Scorers - Caswell Sparks (3), Rory Superfine (3)

OA Reds 25 Hertford 'B's 0

By now the Reds were in a groove and again overran the newly formed Hertford B side, operating as a strong unit that bodes well for the rest of the season. It was good to see some forceful breaks from **Oliver Palmer**, **Toby Palmer** and **Finlay Cripps**, which proved too much for Hertford and, again, our defence was outstanding keeping a clean sheet once more.

Try Scorers - Oliver Palmer (2), Toby Palmer, Caswell Sparks, Jack Tahesh

OA Reds 20 Hertford Barbarians (it was a mixture of their sides) 5

For the second away fixture in a row we ended up playing 5 games, though this time there was no way the Reds were going to let the 100% record slip. **Rory Superfine** had an outstanding game at fly-half, tackling like the Jonny Wilkinson of old .This was supplemented by a fine display from **Zach West** and a well deserved hat trick from **James Clark**.

Try Scorers - James Clark (3), Finlay Cripps

Overall another impressive morning though, as ever, there are several areas to work on in training.

Player of the week - This had to go to one of the half backs, both Caswell Sparks and Rory Superfine were outstanding and **Rory Superfine** took it by the slimmest of margins

Well done all - keep it up!

Report by Rick Powdrell

Coaches - Rick Powdrell, Tim Birchinall and Guy Palmer

Players - James Clark, Finlay Cripps, Matthew Ellis, Adam Ford, Harry Newman-Booth, Oliver Palmer, Toby Palmer, Jonathan Powdrell, Caswell Sparks, Rory Superfine, Jack Tahesh, Zach West, James Yurkwich