

Monday 1st October 2007

## OA's U9's Weekly News

### U9's Successful in their first Contact Rugby Fixtures versus Welwyn RFC on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2007

This week we put out 2 early season squads to face Welwyn RFC at home. This was a taster to see if we were able to compete in contact rugby and we fielded two even ability squads. Both squads emerged victorious as an excellent start to this age group's season.

Well done and thanks to all 30 players who turned out to represent the club and our age group.

The rest of the age group had a training session to continue their development in the contact game.

Thanks to all the coaches for looking after the teams and to Matthew Moffatt for his expert refereeing.

#### The OA Sharks

The Sharks had the privilege of taking the field for OAs first under 9s competitive contact game on a bright and sunny Sunday morning at Woollams.

#### Game 1 - OAs Sharks 35 v Welwyn RFC 5

From the kick off Welwyn RFC had no answer to the Shark's powerful running and aggressive defence. **Cameron Clark** set the tone when from the start he powered through the Welwyn line to score under the metaphorical posts and during the next hour of rugby, the Sharks simply improved.

Tackling was excellent and made more impressive by the way the boys held the defensive line. In fact, during the two games only one try was scored against OAs Sharks. Cameron's tacking was notable making, from the statisticians on the sidelines, something like 27 tackles in the two games.

**Charlie Moffatt** playing scrum half was fast and alert throughout and set up a number of good field positions and scored a couple of tries himself.

Offloading was impressive resulting in good continuity and fluid rugby. Despite the 7 tries -1 score-line in the first game Welwyn, to their credit, never gave up and tackled to the end.

*OA Sharks Scorers* - Cameron Clark (3), William Stewart, Charlie Moffatt, Rory Superfine (2).

#### Game 2 - OAs Sharks 25 v Welwyn Garden City 0

The second game saw Welwyn tighten up their defence which, in the absence of much space, allowed OAs to show, to my mind, the most impressive part of their game - rucking and mauling. Every time an OAs player was tackled or held up his team mates drove the opposition backwards and the ball was recycled. Many times the opposition were held up and two players would come in and rip the ball. It was very impressive to watch and contributed to the comfortable win 25-0.

*OA Sharks Scorers* - Toby Palmer, Cameron Clark (2), Charlie Moffatt and Daniel Hanlon.

The Sharks have to work on two aspects - 1) using all the players (i.e. getting the ball wide to the wings occasionally to keep the opposition guessing) and 2) ensuring that sufficient players are out wide ready to defend/attack and not committed to the breakdown. But it is difficult to be critical after such impressive performance.

**Players of the week.** - Everyone played very well and I would like to single out three players for special mention. **Daniel Hanlon**, playing fly half showed good tackling and running skills, **Charlie Moffatt** for his exciting scrum half performance and, man of the match **Cameron Clark** for around defensive and attacking play.

Well done each and every one of you.

*Report by Simon Mitchell*

**Coaches** - **Simon Mitchell** and **Steve Pope**

**Forwards** - Ethan Arpino, Toby Palmer, Robbie Pope, Zach West, Connor Mitchell, James Clark, James Yurkwich, Luke Benfield

**Backs** - Charlie Moffatt, Jake Mlodecki, Cameron Clark, Rory Superfine, Daniel Hanlon, William Stewart and John Greener.

## The OA Tigers

The dawn of a new season and the first crack at contact for OA's took place on yet another Sunny Sunday.

Just a note to thank Welwyn who were a very accommodating team and who agreed to stay late to give the Tigers two matches, their parents had further to travel home but they helped us out. It was also good to see that they had several girls who have stayed on into the new season.

### Game 1 - OAs Tigers 30 v Welwyn Garden City 5

I was as nervous as a long tailed cat in a room full of rocking chairs at kick off, however, within 10 seconds **Ruairi 'The Natural' McGowan** had ripped the ball away from the opposition and ran on to score - start as you mean to carry on Ruairi.

After this fast start we settled down in a pattern of big booming tackles from **Archie Radovanovic** and **William Parkinson** putting Welwyn under pressure and fast breaks through the heart of Welwyn from **William Parkinson**, **James Lear** and **Luke Simpson** in particular.

The ruck is the tricky thing this year, but I was very pleased to see OA's not closing their eyes and throwing the precious ball away - good safe passes and turning the body to present the ball were the order of the day and that was very good to see. The area to work on is getting up to support the ball carrier and not leaving then isolated, but on balance this was a really good effort.

A special mention for **Kane White** who like most of our wingers in the early part of the season did not get much of the ball but did put in four one on one tackles to shut down his side of the pitch. **Jonathan Powdrell** was obviously the only boy listening during the pre game 'how to set up a maul' session as he turned to do just this during the game and meet with stunned looks of incomprehension from his team-mates and was swallowed up by Welwyn tackles. Next time we will all be on the same page.

A 6 tries - 0 half time score meant the team was mixed up in the second half and the players tried out different positions - although the second half was lost 0- 1we could have scored more tries if we remember you are still allowed to pass the ball!! Hopefully the novelty of contact will dissipate and we can get back to what the game is all about - creating space. The best compliment I can pay **Caswell Sparks** and **Simon Jones** is that, when they came on for Ruairi McGowan and William Parkinson, the standard of play in those positions did not drop at all. It's a squad game this year so that was very promising.

*OA Tigers Scorers* - Ruairi McGowan 2, William Parkinson 2, Luke Simpson 1, James Lear 1

## **Game 2 - OAs Tigers 15 v Welwyn Garden City 0**

A shorter second game with the players jumping around positions - again the size, speed and knowledge of the game meant OA's were on top throughout. We saw another under employed wing, **Paul Greener** make a few tackles to keep Welwyn in the middle of the pitch - and into the heavy tackles of our forward - good stuff Paul keep it up.

As well as the excellent tacking - the game highlighted that the team are fine on the pitch without a coach and that many players can slot into different positions - **Oliver Marshall** played as a forward and centre, as did **Ashling Larmer**. **Simon Jones** and **William Parkinson** were organising the team at restarts, etc and we will need more of this.

The game again saw very little passing and lots of contact - to be expected - but also the seeds of a good forward pair in **James Lear** and **Archie Radovanovic** who carried the ball well and hit some rucks and scored all the tries. I expect to see the wider game develop as we move through the year. Well done to all - a very good first effort.

*OA Tigers Scorers* - Archie Radovanovic 2 James Lear 1

**Players of the week:- James Lear & Archie Radovanovic** - worked well as a unit and were our best ball carrier and tacklers respectively. **Ruairi McGowan** - Great attitude - work rate - understanding of the game and skill level. **William Parkinson** - Good combination of strength and speed, plus he also started to organise the team on the pitch.

*Report by Andrew Radovanovic*

**Coaches** - **Andrew Radovanovic** and **Mike Larmer**

**Forwards** - Archie Radovanovic, James Lear, Jonathan Powdrell, Oliver Palmer, Kane White, Ashling Larmer, Charlie Stubbs

**Backs** - Ruairi McGowan, Caswell Sparks, William Parkinson, Luke Simpson, Simon Jones, Ed Birchinall, Finlay Cripps, Paul Greener