



Old Iltydian RFC

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MATCH REPORT

24 March 07

Monmouth 17 – Old Iltydians 28

Old Iltydians produced a superb performance to defeat 3rd placed Monmouth and strengthen their grip on second place in Division 4 East. On an excellent day for the club, the Second XV routed Monmouth by 44 – 3.

The Illts tore into their hosts from the start, and were camped in the Monmouth half for the first fifteen minutes. Monmouth managed to hold on through some strong defence, aided by an impressive ability to slow down and spoil ball without being penalised by the referee. The Iltydians also contributed to the failure to convert pressure into points, with wrong options taken and mistakes made when within touching distance of the hosts try line.

The opening score finally arrived halfway through the first half. An outrageous dummy and powerful charge by No 8 Keith Chegwin began the move. Centre Neil Dallimore took the ball on and offloaded, and some good link work by the forwards sent Matthew Taylor into space. He backed himself to score with men outside, but a fine cover tackle by the home full back prevented the try. However, flanker Phil Morse was on hand to burrow over for the try. "About f**king time" was heard muttered as the players jogged back to half way.

Fly half Nathan Hopkins missed the difficult conversion, but made no mistake with a penalty a few minutes later as more Iltydian pressure saw the hosts stray offside, extending the lead to 8 – 0.

Monmouth finally got themselves into the game just before half time. A lineout drive took play into the Illts 22, and then a succession of pick and drives and forward carries eventually ended with the home second row forcing his way over for a try. The Illts had defended resolutely, but not aggressively enough to stop the home side's momentum. A fine conversion made the half time score 8 – 7.

The Illts were pleased to turn round a point to the good, having played into a strong wind in the first half. However, the mental lapse that began before half time continued after the break. A moment of ill discipline when in possession cost the Illts a penalty and the lead.

A second penalty from outside half Hopkins edged the Illts back in front at 11 – 10. The pattern of the first half was re-established with the Illts constantly attacking and Monmouth desperately defending. The home sides tight head prop was sent to the sin bin halfway through the second half, although this was probably about 57 minutes too late.



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The Illts took full advantage of the extra man. A powerful run from Stuart Rees took play to within 5 metres of the Monmouth line. A couple of extra phases saw the Illts create a huge overlap, but fly half Hopkins didn't need the men outside and danced through for a try under the posts, which he converted himself to extend the lead to 18 – 10.

From the kick off, the Illts scored again with a superb try. Good hands and powerful carrying by the forwards took play up to the halfway line, and when scrum half Andrew Coles made a half break hooker Andrew Maunder was on hand to take the offload. A 30 metre break opened up the hosts defence, and Maunder's pass found Bessie steaming up in support. His pass was slightly behind Cai Lewis, but the winger gathered the ball on the half volley and stepped in side the cover to surge over. Hopkins again added the conversion to make the score 25 – 10.

With fresh impetus being provided from the replacements bench, the Illts were now rampant. Substitute scrum half Bater powered through 3 tackles and offloaded superbly to Lewis, who was stopped just short. Centre Taylor knocked on with the line at his mercy after another superb move, and the same player was forced into touch after an unbelievable run which seemed to involve 10 hand offs.

Hopkins was close with a 45 metre drop goal attempt that bounced off the cross bar, but minutes later he did successfully land one from closer range to seal the game by extending the lead to 18 points.

Monmouth had the last say with another converted try, after again battering through several phases of forward driving. This took the final score to 28 – 17, and it said everything about the attitude of the team that there was a real sense of disappointment at conceding the try.

For the Illts, props Matt Phillips and Aled Griffiths worked tirelessly round the field and scrummaged very well against a much heavier and more experienced pack. Second rows Justin Benfield and Bessie were superb in the lineout, winning all their own ball and several opposition throws. Phil Morse and Cheggers both worked tremendously hard in defence and attack.

Half backs Andrew Coles and Nathan Hopkins controlled the game superbly, whilst the three quarter line of Lewis, Dallimore, Taylor and Rees attacked powerfully and defended aggressively. Full back Eugene Williams was a constant threat with ball in hand and kicked very well to relieve any pressure the Illts were under. Special mention must be made of flanker John Saunders who defied sickness and diarrhoea for the previous 3 days to play superbly for an hour.

A. Maunder