



MATCH REPORT 31 March 07

Old Iltydians 33 – Llandaff North 21

The Illts produced a disappointing performance in overcoming local rivals Llandaff North, although the news of title rivals Garndiffaiths' defeat at Nantyglo managed to lift the spirits of the players after the game.

The training and pre match talk of not allowing complacency to affect the performance level seemed to be disregarded, as the visitors made the better start against a lethargic home team. An early penalty was converted to give Llandaff North a deserved lead.

The Illts responded quickly, and player coach Matthew Back, deputising for the absent Nathan Hughes at outside half, unlocked the defence with a perfect grubber kick through. The ball was collected by Matthew Taylor who put Cai Lewis in for the opening try. Back converted superbly from out wide to make the score 7 – 3.

The visitors had elected to play down the slope and with the very strong wind in the first half. The Illts were therefore trying to keep the ball in hand and attack their opponents at every opportunity, but poor handling and turnovers frustrated this ambition.

However, the Illts produced a superb second try out of keeping with the majority of the first half performance. An overthrown North lineout on the Illts 5 metre line was collected by No 8 Phil Morse. His offload was followed by a series of passes just before contact from Bessie, John Saunders and Back. Centre Matthew Taylor then made the break before feeding Neil Dallimore. He made 30 yards before throwing a long pass which was brilliantly gathered by full back Matt Bird who raced 50 meters for the score. Back converted to extend the lead to 14 – 3.

More Iltydian indiscipline allowed the visitors outside half to kick 2 more penalties, to close the score to 14 – 9. The Illts managed to string one more good phase of play together before half time, and with the visitors defence stretched, Taylor powered over from close range. Back again converted to make the half time score 21- 9.

With the advantage of the elements in their favour, the Illts were hoping for an improved second half performance. Unfortunately, the mistakes and poor ball retention seen in the first period continued in the second half. Credit must also be given to Llandaff North, who never stopped attacking and drove powerfully through their well drilled driving lineout.



Old Iltydian RFC

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One such lineout drive resulted in a converted try for the visitors flanker, and with the score at 21 – 16, the Illts suddenly had a game on their hands.

Perhaps the most frustrating aspect of the performance was the way the team could respond when challenged by Llandaff North, but could not maintain their performance level when comfortably ahead.

Lewis collected his second try of the match after a powerful break from a scrum from Justin Benfield. Back missed the conversion from the touchline but added the extras soon after when centre Neil Dallimore powered over for the Illts 5th try. With the score at 33 – 16, the stage was set for a big win for the home side, but mistakes and indiscipline allied with the determination of the visitors meant that this never materialised.

Llandaff North had the final word when another lineout drive led to the ball being spun wide for the left wing to score in the corner. The conversion was missed to leave the final score at 33- 21.

The Illts will have to play considerably better to win away at Norths rivals Llandaff next week, but a win is a must if their title ambitions are to be kept alive.

Finally, the nasty shoulder injury suffered by full back Matt Bird was a big blow to the Illtydians. Everyone at the club wishes him a speedy recovery and the best of luck in the future, as Saturday was probably his last game for the club due to the conclusion of his studies at UWIC.

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