



Old Illydian RFC

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MATCH REPORT 28 April 07

Risca 28 – Old Illydians 49

The Old Illydians clinched promotion with a 17th consecutive victory to complete a memorable week for the club. After upsetting near neighbours Rumney in the cup on Wednesday, the main objective for the season was achieved as the Illts avenged their only home defeat of the season by defeating Risca.

Almost inevitably after their midweek heroics, the Illts performance was a bit flat as they struggled to put away a spirited home side. However, the Illts long unbeaten run was never really under threat, and at the final whistle they could celebrate a well deserved and hard earned promotion.

The first half was a topsy turvy affair, with the Illts scoring almost every time they strung more than three phases together, but also conceding points almost immediately after scoring on each occasion.

The visitors defence lacked its usual intensity, and the players seemed to be lacking in energy which meant they were too frequently turned over. The Illts game was a mixture of sublime handling and quick rugby interspersed with poor support play and sloppy mistakes.

First half tries were scored by wing Cai Lewis, outside half Nathan Hopkins (2), scrum half Matthew Bater and second row Steve Trust. After the first four Illts tries, Risca responded with two tries and two penalties, capitalising on Illydian mistakes and slack defence to bring themselves into the game on each occasion.

The Illts led at half time by 29 – 20, as Hopkins had added two conversions to the five tries that the Illts had scored. Coaches Matt Lloyd and Matt Back stressed the need for one final push to clinch promotion in the second half.

Risca brought themselves back to within one score with an early penalty in the second half. As they have done so often this season, the Illts found an extra gear when they needed to.

Stuart Rees scored after good work from Justin Benfield and Neil Dallimore, and Dallimore added a fine individual try which was converted by Hopkins to extend the lead to 41 – 23. Flanker Phil Morse rounded off another good attack by dummieing over in the corner, and Hopkins set the seal on the victory by adding a drop goal.

Risca had the last say with an unconverted try from their outside half, which brought the final score to 49 – 28. The pride of the Illydians was highlighted when they twice pushed Risca off their own ball in the final minutes, denying the home side a further consolation score.

For the Illydians, several players struggled to repeat the form of the midweek win over Rumney, but Justin Benfield was outstanding for the second time in four days, leading from the front in both attack and defence.

A. Maunder