



## MATCH REPORT 25 April 07

### Old Iltydians 37 – Rumney 21

The Illts produced a superb performance to knock out local rivals Rumney and book a place in the East District Cup Final. Rumney were in confident mood before the game, having recently clinched promotion to Division 1, but they were knocked out of their stride by a ferocious performance from the Illts.

The Illts tore into their opponents from the start, with centres Neil Dallimore and Matthew Taylor and flanker Dai Mac hounding the Rumney midfield into poor passing and mistakes.

Outside half Matthew Back gave Rumney a taste of things to come with a well struck penalty to put the Illts into a 3 -0 lead after they strayed offside. A second penalty from Back extended the lead to 6 - 0, after Rumney had been penalised for handling in a ruck.

The Illts really began to scent an upset was on the cards when they extended their lead with a converted try. A loose pass by the Rumney scrum half allowed Back to force a turnover. Dai Mac drove on and the forwards recycled quickly before quick hands from prop Matt Phillips and Back released Taylor into space. His pace took him clear of the Rumney defence before a lovely reverse pass sent full back Stuart Rees racing under the posts for a try, converted by Back for a 13 - 0 lead.

Rumney began to come into the game and they turned down a couple of kickable penalties to kick for the corner. They used their well organised driving lineout to rumble over from 15 metres for a converted try, which made the score 13 - 7.

The Iltydians strengthened their grip on the game as the half wore on. The Illts were quicker to every breakdown, forcing Rumney to concede penalties for holding on when the ball carrier was isolated. The Illts ball retention was superb, meaning Rumney gave away more penalties in an attempt to turn the ball over.

The Illts confidence was highlighted by a superb passing movement from deep in their own half, which ended with wing Nathan Hughes making a superb 50 metre run. The inevitable penalty at the ruck which followed saw the Rumney opsided sin binned. Back kicked the penalty to extend the advantage to 16 - 7.

Powerful running from the Illts three quarter line meant Rumney were constantly on the back foot, with wing Cai Lewis and Matthew Taylor prominent. A second Rumney player saw yellow for a high tackle, and Back again made no mistake, rolling back the years with a fourth successful penalty to extend the lead to 19 - 7. Infringements at the breakdown was the only way Rumney could stem the green tide, and a fifth penalty from Back made the half time score 22 - 7 to the Iltydians.

The Illts were expecting a Rumney backlash in the second half, especially as they were back to full strength after the return of the yellow carded players. The Iltydian defence was superb however, and only the powerful Rumney driving maul looked likely to breach it.



# Old Iltydian RFC

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After absorbing early pressure at the start of the second half, the Illts were soon back on the attack. After a driving lineout had been stopped just short of the Rumney line, the Illts were awarded a scrum 5. No 8 Mark 'Cheggars' Coles fed Dallimore with a deft pass, and a superb step by the centre left the Rumney defence floundering as he scored close to the posts. Backs conversion put the Illts into a seemingly unassailable 29 – 7 lead.

Rumney threw caution to the wind and attacked strongly, despite again being reduced to 14 men after some cynical killing of the ball. The Iltydian defence remained resolute, with some superb kicking from Back repeatedly relieving the pressure they were under.

Rumney gave themselves a glimmer of hope with another unconverted try with 20 minutes left. Another powerful maul was stopped just short of the Iltydian line, and a clever switch to the blindside and pass out of the tackle from the Rumney outside half created a try for the left wing. A superb touchline conversion made the score 29 – 14.

Rumney were now camped in Iltydian territory, but with the Illts lineout solid on their own ball, they repeatedly eased the pressure with solid catches and drives and kicks from Back and scrum half Andrew Coles.

With ten minutes left the Illts put the seal on a famous victory. A clever box kick from Coles put the Rumney defence under pressure thanks to a superb chase from winger Nathan Hughes. A poor clearance kick was gathered by outstanding second row Justin Benfield, whose powerful charge took play deep into the Rumney half. From the resulting ruck, Dallimore put a superbly weighted chip through to the corner. Cai Lewis outpaced the defence to win the race and touch down, meaning the Illts lead was 20 points after Back missed his first kick of the day from the touchline.

Rumney attacked to the bitter end, and after a series of quick tap penalties their full back scored a fine individual try, dancing between two Iltydian defenders to score under the posts. The conversion meant the score was 34 – 21, but with only a few minutes left Rumney knew the game was up.

The Illts finished the game on the attack, and when they won a penalty forty metres out, Back sealed the victory with his eighth successful penalty, making the final score 37 – 21.

It is difficult to single out any players in such a superb team performance, but several players deserve special mention. Centre Neil Dallimore scored one try and made another and his aggressive defence and ability to turn the ball over were vital components in the victory. Matthew Back kicked 22 points and his defence and line kicking were outstanding.

However, the man of the match was openside flanker Dai Mac, whose tackle and turnover count must have been in double figures and who seemed to be first to every ball in attack and defence.

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