



Old Iltydian RFC

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MATCH REPORT 21 April 07

Tredegar Ironsides 12 – Old Iltydians 25

The Illts took another step closer to promotion with a hard fought win at Tredegar Ironsides, the second time in as many weeks that they had triumphed over the same opponents.

With injuries and unavailability continuing to disrupt the backline, the Iltydians were delighted to welcome back Tommy Walsh from a lengthy spell on the sidelines. He slotted in at outside centre, and opened the scoring just 2 minutes into his return after he took a pass from Nathan Hopkins to score under the posts. Hopkins slotted the conversion to put the Illts 7 – 0 ahead.

Tredegar had shown last week that they weren't likely to roll over without a fight, and they fought back immediately, moving the ball wide and stretching an Illts defence that was lacking its usual aggression. After several phases of pressure, the Illts defence cracked allowing the home side to score an unconverted try which reduced the visitors' advantage to 2 points.

The Illts had a strong wind behind them in the first half, and excellent kicking from half backs Hopkins and Andrew Coles allowed them to dominate territory. The Illts struggled to make their dominance count as numerous chances went begging. The referee's reluctance to use the yellow card, despite repeated infringements from the home side, also made scoring more difficult.

Pressure was finally turned into points when Andrew Coles charged down a kick from a scrum on the Ironsides 5 metre line and reacted quickest to claim the loose ball and touch down.

The Illts scored a third try before half time to take a firm grip on the game. An excellent box kick from Coles was superbly chased by winger Nathan Hughes. The home sides full back put in rushed clearance, which was carried back strongly by prop Matt Phillips. The ball was recycled quickly and moved wide for full back Eugene Williams to score in the corner. The try was unconverted and the Iltydians led 17 -5.

A drop goal by Nathan Hughes after some good driving from the forwards extended the lead to 20 – 5 at half time. The home side would still have fancied their chances at the break, with a strong wind behind them in the second half.

The Illts forwards took control of the game in the second half. Needing to retain the ball in the face of a strong wind, they carried strongly and drove powerfully, keeping the ball away from the home side.

This more pragmatic approach paid dividends when Mark 'Cheggars' Coles scored after a neat lineout move. This score extended the visitors lead to 25 – 5.

Tredegar used the wind to repeatedly take the play into the Iltydian half, but the visitor's lineout was rock solid, with Bessie and Steve Trust dominant.

The home side kept the pressure on until the end, and the home skipper took advantage of some lazy defence to score under the posts, making the score 12 – 25. The Illts were not to be denied however, and held on to record a 15th consecutive victory, and move themselves within one victory of an immediate return to Division 3.

A. Maunder