



Old Iltydian RFC

www.oldiltydianrugby.co.uk



MATCH REPORT

14 April 07

Old Iltydians 45 – Tredegar Ironsides 24

Old Iltydians took another step towards promotion with a hard fought home victory against Tredegar Ironsides. The Illts had a disrupted backline, with Matthew Taylor missing and Neil Dallimore forced to pull out during the warm up. Everyone at the Illts offer their condolences to Neil Dallimore and his family on the sad passing of his grandfather on Saturday.

The Illts had to reshuffle with outside halves Nathan Hopkins and Eugene Williams forming the midfield along with outside centre Stuart Rees, and scrum half Andrew Coles playing as a makeshift fullback. Despite this, the Illts started quickly. Some excellent offloading created the space for Stuart Rees to score wide on the left. The conversion was missed to leave the Illts 5 – 0 ahead. This lead was quickly extended to 12 – 0. More excellent offloading put Rees in to a half gap, and his pass inside released Hopkins in to space and he stepped the full back superbly to score underneath the posts for a try he converted himself.

However, the Ironsides were also committed to keeping the ball alive, and coupled with the glorious weather and firm pitch this meant the game was being played at breakneck speed. The visitors brought themselves back into the game with a try from their winger after a nice break from the inside centre. The conversion was missed but it wasn't long before the Illts extended their lead. Some fine phase play was finished off when second row Justin Benfield thundered onto a short pass from Hopkins to score at the posts. Hopkins converted to extend the lead to 19 -5.

The visitors refused to lie down and fought back with a converted try of their own when their fullback powered through a gap from a clever set piece move. The free scoring pattern of the game continued when wing Cai Lewis scored after another superb handling move. The conversion was missed but Lewis added a superb individual score shortly afterwards. No 8 Mark Coles broke powerfully from a scrum and offloaded to Lewis who rounded the opposition full back superbly to score underneath the posts. Hopkins conversion took the score to 31 – 12, and the Illtydians seemingly had the game in the bag.

The Ironsides had other ideas however, and hit back when a well worked set piece move resulted in their hooker scoring at the posts. The conversion brought the half time score to 31 -19.

When the visitors scored again at the start of the second half, the Illts' long winning run appeared to be under threat. I have no idea how the try came about as I was filling up



Old Iltydian RFC

www.oldiltydianrugby.co.uk



water bottles at the time. The uneasiness amongst the home supporters increased when Stuart Rees was yellow carded for retaliating to a dangerous head high tackle. As so often though, the Illts showed their character by stepping up a gear when they were under pressure. Benfield scored a virtual carbon copy of his first try, powering onto another pass from Hopkins. The conversion took the score to 38 – 24, and the Illts supporters could relax again.

The game became increasingly bad tempered, with one major flare up involving all 30 players remarkably resulting in no yellow cards for either side. The Illts were now back to full strength, and sealed victory with another fine try. The Illts moved quick ball from a lineout, and when Matthew Bater reversed the play, prop Aled Richards provided the scoring pass for hooker Dave Rowlands. The celebrations were the wildest since Rowley found his beloved horse Steptoe 2 weeks ago.

The Illts play the Ironsides next week in the return fixture, knowing that 2 victories from the final 3 games will guarantee an immediate return to division 3.

A. Maunder