



Bath Time for Puddletown

Puddletown 71 Bath Saracens 27

by Geoff Puryer

A bright but blustery afternoon at Greenfields saw a Puddletown club side comfortably beat their visitors from Dorset & Wilts Division 2 North in a hastily arranged fixture.

Saracens, on tour for the weekend, had originally been due to play a Weymouth XV but when the Seaside cancelled the game with just days to go the Villagers stepped in and agreed to play host instead.

The result was an enjoyable and high scoring contest, due in no small part to it being a thirteen-a-side game, the extra space on the park giving both sets of backs more freedom to move the ball and find the gaps.

The visitors started slowly, not surprisingly as their tour had begun the day before, but as their heads cleared, they showed some good skills and their speedy youngsters ended up running in five tries.

Puddletown however were in a different class from the outset, and the interplay between fly-half Tom Yeatman and his centres Stuart Mead and Barry Dovell was outstanding throughout, whilst Chris Thomson and Dan Udell, running from deep onto their passes repeatedly breached the Bath defence.

But none of this would have been possible without a regular supply of good clean ball, and the home forwards' superior scrummaging and rucking skills ensured that skipper Martin Spicer, playing at scrum-half, had plenty of ball to feed his backs.

The Villagers' front row of Justin Owers, Jon Wilson, and Rob Jameson was rock steady all match whilst the trio of Peter Gordon, Harlan Hill, and Jim Talbot behind them worked tirelessly breaking up the visitors' attacks and making the hard yards. This effort was not lost on Spicer when, after the game, he gave the man of the match award to Talbot in recognition of the forwards' part in the victory.

By the time referee John Read signalled the end of the game the home side had run in thirteen tries. Udell was top scorer with four, followed closely by a rampant Jon Wilson, who kept appearing in the line and who finished with a hat trick.

After the match the Bath captain presented Spicer with a commemorative club tie and shirt before saying: "On Wednesday night we were resigned to arranging a seven-a-side tag game on the beach for today. Instead we've not only had a proper game of rugby, but also enjoyed some

splendid hospitality; we're very grateful to Puddletown for arranging all that at such short notice and for making us so welcome".

"Thanks too must go to Mr Read who also stepped in at the last minute and ensured that we all behaved ourselves on the pitch!"

Puddletown XIII

1. Justin Owers 2. Jon Wilson 3. Rob Jameson 4. Jim Talbot 5. Pete Gordon 6. Guest from Saracens 7. none 8. Harlan Hill 9. Martin Spicer (capt.) 10. Tom Yeatman 11. none 12. Stuart Mead 13. Barry Dovell 14. Chris Thomson 15. Dan Udell

Scorers:

Tries: Dan Udell (4) Jon Wilson (3) Barry Dovell (2) Stuart Mead (2) Harlan Hill (1) Martin Spicer (1)

Conversions: Jon Wilson (2) Dan Udell (1)

Moment of the Match (1)

Dan Udell, having scored an incredibly lucky try minutes earlier, decided to silence the jeers by demonstrating his full range of skills. On his next attack, running straight with just the full back to beat, he decided to chip him and put in an inch-perfect kick.

So pleased was he with accuracy of his effort that he forgot to follow up and score!

Moment of the Match (2)

Heeding Mr Read's request for a game with a minimal amount of kicking, the majority of Puddletown's players took this to include conversion attempts.

A competition emerged and Peter Gordon's late effort, which never left the ground and just about made it to the foot of the post, was judged by the touchline experts to be a clear winner!