



Puddletown 0 Blandford 57
Puddletown 5 East Dorset 47

by Geoff Puryer 18//04/10

There was to be no silver lining for the struggling Villagers on this final weekend of the league season as they were outclassed by local rivals Blandford in Dorset and Wilts Division 1 South, then 24 hours later, knocked out in the semi-final of the Plate competition by an unbeaten East Dorset team.

Saturday's league encounter was always going to be a difficult game for the Puddletown squad, already relegated and with one eye firmly focussed on Sunday's cup tie, whilst the visitors, recently strengthened by the return of several players following spells with bigger clubs, were simply looking to continue their end of season improvement and dominated the game from the start.

As usual there was no lack of endeavour from the home side with fly-half Tom Yeatman at the heart of every attacking move, but the Villagers' defence simply had no answer to the visitors' big back row forwards as they powered to a 33 point lead by half-time, piling on a further four tries by the end of the match.

Several key Puddletown players were back for Sunday's semi-final and the home side started brightly enough against their Christchurch based visitors. But they failed to turn their early dominance into points, and as so often this season were made to pay when, on fifteen minutes, East Dorset broke out of their own half to score the opening try.

Nevertheless the Villagers continued to enjoy the better territorial advantage and had several more good chances to level things up, until twice in quick succession, right on half time, the visitors' inside centre intercepted passes to breakaway and score, and they turned round with a rather fortunate 21 point lead.

Puddletown immediately stepped up a gear and continued to threaten East Dorset's line, but their defence held firm then, bizarrely, yet another intercept by the same player saw him sprint the length of the field for his hat-trick. From that point on the Division 3 South champions never looked to be in danger and as the home side pushed up, so the gaps appeared in their own defence and the visitors were able to run in a further three tries to seal a deserved victory.

The Villagers did at least have the consolation of the final score when, after patient recycling from the forwards, the ball was passed along the line for replacement Nigel Smith to beat his man and cross the line.

Puddletown 1st XV versus Blandford

1. Jon Wilson 2. Tim Yeatman 3. Jim Talbot 4. Pete Gordon 5. Dave Phillips
6. Harry Foot 7. James Green 8. Ed Malpas 9. Gareth Price 10. Tom Yeatman
11. Rob Franks 12. Will Hiscock 13. Nigel Smith 14. James House 15. Dan Udell (capt)

Replacements: Martin Spicer (for Ed Malpas - 40 mins) Matt Williams (for Jon Wilson - 50 mins) Toby Boatswain, Toby Musgrove - not used.

Scorers:

Tries: None
Conversions: None
Penalties: None

Dorset Piddle Brewery Man of the Match: Tom Yeatman

Puddletown 1st XV versus East Dorset

1. Justin Owers 2. Tim Yeatman 3. Ed Richardson 4. Pete Gordon 5. Jim Talbot
6. Toby Boatswain 7. Neil Cahill 8. Martin Spicer 9. Gareth Price 10. Tom Yeatman
11. Matt Isaac 12. Barry Dovell 13. Dan Udell (capt) 14. James House
15. Marcus House

Replacements: Nigel Smith (for James House - 40 mins) Jon Wilson (for Justin Owers - 50 mins) James Green (for Neil Cahill - 60 mins) Matt Williams (for Jim Talbot - 60 mins) Harry Foot (for Toby Boatswain - 65 mins)

Scorers:

Tries: Nigel Smith (1)
Conversions: None
Penalties: None

Dorset Piddle Brewery Man of the Match: Gareth Price

Final match of the season :

Saturday 1st May - kick off 3:00 pm

Puddletown XV v Manor Park RFC (on tour - Midlands League 4)