



Frome 2nds 36 Puddletown 0

by Geoff Puryer 17/10/09

After last week's comprehensive defeat at home to Bridport, the Villagers travelled to Frome looking for a significant improvement from their injury-hit squad. A tough call, with the in-form Somerset side having won three out of their first four games, but the visitors were boosted by the return of winger Mike Ball, second row Jon Perrett, and scrum-half Ray Stephens, all making their first starts of the season.

Both teams began brightly with Puddletown's forwards settling to the task of countering Frome's well rehearsed rolling mauls, and in fact it was the visitors who had the first real chance when centre Scott Rumble, picking up loose ball on halfway, made a good run only to be tackled into touch ten metres short.

But within minutes the home side, having forced their way back up field, took the lead. From a five-metre scrum their number nine spotted a gap, dashed through, and touched down under the posts, adding the extra two points himself.

Play continued in midfield, with both sets of forwards largely cancelling each other out, but the Villagers did once again wrest the advantage, going through the phases to get within sight of the line, only for the attack to finally break down when the referee awarded a penalty for holding on.

If the visitors had turned round just 7-0 down, after facing the stiff breeze, there would have been all to play for in the second half, instead a disastrous spell just before the break saw Frome capitalise on woeful defending to run in a further two converted tries and stretch the lead to 21 points.

To their credit Puddletown fought back straight from the restart, and with Joel Hornby and Perrett working tirelessly to breach the home defensive line, attacking opportunities continued to present themselves. Skipper Dan Udell had the first chance to put points on the board but missed a penalty, then a series of strong runs from prop Jon Wilson, flanker Martin Spicer, and fly-half Toby Musgrove, all made good ground but each time failed to get the follow-up support they deserved.

Inevitably, chasing the game as they had to at that stage meant that the Villagers' defence was going to come under increasing threat, and in the final quarter the home side's backs, on the break and with ball in hand, were able to find the spaces out wide to score three further tries to take the game beyond reach.

Puddletown now have a week off, giving their injured players a chance to recover, before facing third placed Warminster at Greenfields on 31st October.

After the game captain Dan Udell commented: "Despite the score that was a better performance, and I must thank our forwards for sticking to their task against opponents who are always strong up front. We did really well to match them".

"Once again this week we had to ring the changes particularly in the backs, and its little wonder that we're struggling to find any cohesion and continuity at present. But it will come if we are patient and stay positive, I'm sure of that".

To illustrate his point, the club statistics show that after just five league games 34 different players have already represented the 1st XV, with only Martin Spicer, Jim Talbot, Jon Wilson, and the skipper himself having played in all five.

Puddletown 1st XV

1. Jon Wilson 2. Toby Boatswain 3. Ed Richardson 4. Jon Perrett 5. Jim Talbot
6. Dan Durdle 7. Martin Spicer 8. Joel Hornby 9. Ray Stephens 10. Toby Musgrove
11. Mike Ball 12. Dan Udell (capt) 13. Scott Rumble 14. Tom Jackson 15. Mark Thomson

Replacements: 17. Nigel Smith (for Toby Musgrove - 60 mins)

Scorers:

Tries: None

Conversions: None

Penalties: None

Dorset Piddle Brewery Man of the Match: Joel Hornby