



Puddletown 5 Warminster 17

by Geoff Puryer 31/10/09

The Villagers suffered a fourth successive league defeat at the hands of Warminster to leave them rooted at the bottom of the table. Nevertheless their young squad, nearly back to full strength, will take heart from a much improved performance which, but for a couple of soft tries at the end of the first period, could well have resulted in a different outcome.

The Wiltshire team, with confidence running high following their victory at Bridport last time out, started strongly, dominating the first quarter, and forcing Puddletown to dig deep to defend their line. The pressure eventually told and on 15 minutes the visitors' back row combined to break through and score under the posts. The try was converted to give them a 7-0 lead.

The home side responded well as the forwards started to get the measure of Warminster's big pack, and ten minutes later having taken play deep into the scoring zone, forced their opponents into offending. Quick thinking from scrum-half Josh Hiscock saw him take a tap penalty ten metres out and completely wrong-foot the visiting defence with a splendid dummy, allowing him to run through unchallenged to touch down.

The conversion was missed but the home side were back on terms, at least until the next play, when bizarrely Warminster restarted with what seemed to be a complete mis-kick. The ball grubbed along the ground towards the touchline, and whilst everyone else waited for the referee's whistle, the visitors' winger gratefully gathered up the ball to sprint through and score.

Minutes later another break on the right ended with the Warminster player being tackled onto the corner flag. The home defence claimed a foot in touch, but after a lengthy consultation with the line judge the referee decided to award a try.

Clearly stung by these events the Villagers came out for the second half in determined mood and as the returning Hiscock and fly-half Tom Yeatman began to rediscover their early season form, the home side were able to launch a series of increasingly promising attacks. Defensively too the big tackles were coming from all areas of the park denying Warminster any further chances to threaten the home line.

For their part the visitors were determined not to surrender their advantage, using all of their experience to slow the game down at every opportunity, so disrupting the home side's rhythm, and despite their best endeavours the Villagers ended the game without adding to their score.

Puddletown coaching co-ordinator Toby Musgrove said of the performance: "We battled really well for the whole game against a hard physical side, and I was pleased with the way we kept trying to work the openings, particularly in the second half"

"There's no doubt that the players returning to duty today made a big difference, and whilst I would particularly mention Harlan Hill in defence, and Josh Hiscock and Tom Yeatman in attack, all six played really well and took some of the pressure off the guys who've been battling away without them for the last few games. There were some big performances from them too".

"As for the two tries we shipped just at the end of the first half, lets not dwell on them, the referee called them as he saw them, and anyway on both occasions we only have ourselves to blame for not being more switched on defensively"

"Next week sees us travel to second placed North Dorset. If we can take the same squad up there and start as we finished today, we could well pull off a surprise".

Puddletown 1st XV

1. Jon Wilson 2. Tim Yeatman 3. Ed Richardson 4. James Perrett 5. Paul Chidley
6. Toby Boatswain 7. Harlan Hill 8. Martin Spicer 9. Josh Hiscock 10. Tom Yeatman
11. Matt Isaac 12. Dan Udell (capt) 13. Scott Rumble 14. Mike Ball 15. Tom Jackson

Replacements: 16. Jim Talbot (for James Perrett - 40 mins) 17. Jack Foot (for Matt Isaac - 55 mins) 18. Ed Malpas (for Paul Chidley - 70 mins)

Not used: 19. Dan Durdle 20. James Green

Scorers:

Tries: Josh Hiscock (1)

Conversions: None

Penalties: None

Dorset Piddle Brewery Man of the Match: Martin Spicer