

The final battle of 2016 saw the Legion travel to bottom of the table Worcester Wanderers. Unavailability's meant that Newport fielded a relatively new team with a lot of players never having played together. Needless to say, these 18 warriors were more than capable of getting the job done.

NOW... in a decision that shook the legion ranks to the core, the Legion stalwart that is our El Capitano, Sir Jonny 'Noberto Deserticus' Stiles was called up to the 1<sup>st</sup> XV as well as a late call up for local farm hero, Dave Pugh who was drafted in when one of the 1<sup>st</sup> XV got a nasty papercut on Friday night so was unable to play.

The Legion warmed up and tried to gel with the new faces as best they could, throwing moves and calls together at a minutes' notice. Relieved to find out that Mr Lowbridge had deceived the troop and Rico Gear would in fact NOT be playing, meant that Newport kicked off with confidence high. A perfectly weighted kick from Fly-Half, Ben Burrows allowed Henry Holmes to tap the ball back to the onrushing Newport forwards. Good phases allowed Newport to move up the field into an attacked position where Worcester gave away a penalty that allowed Burrows to kick to the corner flag... or did it... After the kick had sailed perfectly into touch, 2 Metres from the goal line, the referee was informed that the flag had been put in the wrong place and the kick had actually gone dead. Bizarrely, a 22 Drop out was awarded to Worcester, who fluffed the kick and allowed Newport to attack their line once more. Further infringements allowed Burrows a second chance to hit the corner flag which he did with a perfectly struck kick. After a few phases of forward play off the line out, Newport were awarded a Scrum on the 5 Metre line which was marched over by Howells for the first try of the afternoon. Burrows added the extras from out wide.

A period of handling errors and basic defensive errors allowed Worcester into the Newport 22 and after 5 minutes of intense defence, the ranks were eventually breached and Worcester dotted down for their first try of the afternoon. Realising that this would not be the typical top vs bottom clash, Newport gathered around Captain Trojan Woodenhorse for some calming word and direction. With the words of the Captain in their heads the legion restarted and Holmes collided with the catcher in what has become one of his trademark hits. The resulting knock on allowed Potter to release the back

division of Burrows, Thomas and Evans who combined for Evans to beat 3 men Bukkake style before dotting down in the corner with the whitewash on his smeared across his shirt. Evans proving that he is worth every penny and 'Just for Men', that the legion spent to entice him away from his 1<sup>st</sup> XV duties. Evans went on to score his second try of the afternoon on 30 minutes but turning point of the game was when Ben Burrows took a nasty blow to the neck meaning that play had to be halted as Emma Woodhouse raced over from the sideline, baby still strapped to her front to tend to the injured Burrows. The injury was judged to be serious enough to warrant an ambulance so it was decided that play would be moved to an adjacent pitch for the match to continue. As Charlie Walsh had also left the field after a vicious stamp from the referee, Newport would play the remaining 40 minutes with 14 Players. A re-shuffle in the backs bought Thomas to 10, Lort to 12 and Mr Man of Many Talents, Ollie Grant to cover wing, flanker, water-boy and kicking tee attendant. It was off a break from this hairless beauty that set up an event that will go down in history... Grant broke the line, offloaded to a rampaging Luke Kendall who faced a 1 on 1 with the Worcester fullback. Deciding against his usual barrel roll, usually tripping over his own feet before contact, he instead threw a sidestep that sent the Fullback into a Bambi on Ice moment as Kendall charged passed. Not content with his achievements, Kendall then raced away as if he was being chased by Henry Holmes with the soap to score a **fantastic try** (Disclaimer: this is the only time that this event will EVER be mentioned in public again. Any references to this event will simply be mentioned as: Oh yeah, that blonde hooker scored once.) With Newport now firmly in the driving seat, Thomas sent a long range kick downfield which bounced up perfectly for Evans to gather and race away to complete his hat-trick. A lapse in concentration allowed Worcester to score twice in the second half but the last say went to the Bearded Wonder that is Alex Brazendale who made a strange squeal/grunt as he barrelled over from close range to end the day at 34-15.

A good day at the office for the Legion means that they end 2016 at the top of the table and already have 4<sup>th</sup> March in their diary when they take on Burton which is destined to be the title decider.

Team: Pardessi, Superstar, Gregory, Woodhouse(C), Walsh, Grant, Holmes, Howells, Potter, Burrows, Lort, Thomas, Evans, Brazendale, Lewis