

Newport Legion XV Vs Luctonians 2nd XV

03/02/2018 (Midlands Division 1 Reserve League)

Newport make history by completing the double over Luctonians at The Old Showground

Saturday 3rd February will go down in history for the Legion and the club as a whole as it was the first time in a season that Newport had won the home and away fixtures against the powerhouse that is Luctonians. The ground was wet, the wind was strong and with rain coming down relentlessly, the conditions mirrored that of when the teams last met in October where Newport ran out 24-15 winners in a hotly contested battle. Knowing that whenever Luctonians take to the field, they have one objective, victory at all costs, the Legion put together their strongest team possible to front up to the challenge presented.

With a nasty bout of Eastern Equine Encephalitis after a nasty mosquito bite to the groin area, Jack Wells was forced to withdraw from the squad and after frantic calls were made, a young Irish man by the name of Lewis McLinton, full to the brim with Guinness and Jameson's was lured to The Old Showground to steady the ship in the front row. Credit to the man, although he smelt like an industrial accident at a whiskey distillery and one breath could down a horse, he converted all of the liquid into energy and played the game like a leprechaun on nitrous.

Luctonians kicked the game kicked off and playing down the infamous slope, Newport looked to implement their exit strategy down into coffin corner. After 5 minutes of Newport pressure, a box kick inside the 22 was charged down and invited Luctonians to advance on the Newport line. Playing classic Luctonians 'Route one rugby' they relentlessly tried to breach the defence but the Legion held firm. It was at this point that Legion centre, John Keary saw his delightful better half sat in the dugout next to Casanova himself, Nick Gregory who had returned from Brazil after a 6 month layover where he has been modelling banana hammocks. Fearful that even one touch from Casanova may impregnate his better half, Keary decided to smash his face into the opposition 12 which resulted in both of them leaving the field with significant injuries. Some men will go to extreme lengths to protect the women they love and with NTG back on the scene; sales of chastity belts will be through the roof! Nordvang the Viking entered the arena at wing and Hartshorne pushed in to 13.

Having survived the onslaught from Luctonians, the Legion used their dominant pack to give Newport an attacking platform. Infringements from Lucs gave Harrhy the opportunity to kick 3 points and open the account. From the resulting re-start, Newport kicked deep into coffin corner and used their dominance in the pack to keep Lucs in their own 22. As Newport shoved Lucs of their own ball, Jiminez was able to pick from the base of the scrum and galloped over for the opening try. Harrhy duly converted to take the score to 10-0. It was only minutes later that the super Spaniard popped up again after a 60 metre break from Pennells saw Jiminez score in the corner. With his right boot in fine fettle, Harrhy added the extras once again.

With possession evenly shared between the two teams, Newport cleared their lines on 3 minutes but with a poor, disjointed kick chase, the fleet footed Lucs fullback was able to counter from half

way and score in the corner almost unopposed. All too aware that a Luctonians team will never roll over and will fight till the end, Thomas re-emphasised the importance of playing as a 15 if they were to be victors at 80 minutes. With the Legion forwards still dominating up front, the backs enjoyed the front foot platform provided and a flowing link play between Harry and Thomas saw Hartshorne put over in the corner for a well worked try. Harry converting once again to take the score to 24-5. In a commanding position and with half time beckoning, a penalty inside the 22 saw Thomas instruct his army of ogres to advance on the Lucs line for a lineout. With Sergeant leaping in what's referred to as Goulson'esq manner, the ball was taken and rumbled over from close range by a Blind Pig fuelled, Luke Kendall. Harry was unable to add the extras and the half time score stood at a commanding 30-5 in the Legion's favour.

With ex manager Marcus Aurelius Lowbridgissimo looking on, new manager Vincenti Valentino Harry was keen not to repeat mistakes from the previous season where the introduction of 6 players at half time disjointed the team and allowed Lucs to steal a victory (people don't forget MARK!). Live wire, energiser bunny on a case of red bull, Abdulrahman was added to inject some live into the game and the second half was embarked on. Playing down the hill in the second half, Lucs managed to bring the game to Newport and enjoyed the majority of possession, forcing Newport to defend their line on many occasions. Newport did manage to score against the run of play with a reload down the short side allowing Thomas to feed Sergeant who exposed some of the less mobile Lucs players and he coasted in to score. 37-5

With the game seemingly won, Newport tried to play some exciting rugby in the latter stages of the game. Attacking from anywhere and everywhere as Luctonians were now down to 14 players due to injuries. Ultimately, Newport took their eye off the ball and allowed Lucs to pounce on a chance inside the Newport 22 to score their second, well deserved try.

Unconverted the final score stood at 37-10 to Newport which caps an impressive double victory over Luctonians which has not previously been done by a senior side at Newport. Credit to Luctonians, they played with tenacity and passion for the full 80 minutes but a dominant Newport pack set the platform for a performance to remember for Newport. Man of the match this week would surely have gone to Jake Goulson but on the day, it was the ever reliable Jiminez who took the accolade with Harry being awarded the new 'Play of the Month' Tankard.

A long layoff from league action now with the next game against Buuurmingham Bees in March. Hopefully, someone will be daring enough to take on the Legion in a friendly during this period

TEAM: L.McLinton, L.Kendall, R.Biggin, S.Seargent, C.Campbell, L.Few, G.Gribble, J.Jiminez

R.Harry, P.Thomas(C), D.Harthorne, J.Keary, J.Pennells, S.Knight, S.MacKenzie

BENCH: N.Gregory, A.Copsey, H.Holmes, S.Abdulrahman, R.Nordvang

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