

Newport Legion XV Vs Newbold 2nd XV

16/09/2016 (Midlands Elite Reserve League)

The Legion go bold and defeat Newbold

This weekend saw the Legion accompany the 1st XV to Newbold for both teams to play away fixtures and their respective leagues. A doubly important clash for the Legion as they had drawn Newbold at home in the League Cup but decided to give up the home advantage and play the away fixture as a double header, winner takes all.

Having suffered an agonising defeat in their opening fixture of the season, the Legion were keen to prove that they'd learnt from their mistakes and that they are a team worthy of a spot in the Elite Division. As has become a troubling trend, a lot of late withdrawals meant that once again, a lot of work behind the scenes ensured that the Legion could field a strong, competitive side. Special thanks must go to Gaz Davies for his help and promotion of talented colts players into the senior setup.

Having won the toss, Newbold decided to up the significant hill during the first half to give themselves an easier ride for the second half. With that in mind, the Legion knew it was imperative to capitalise on the advantage of the slope and the slight wind and from the kick off, the game plan was to pin Newbold into their own 22 and try to starve them of possession. Implementing the pod systems well and moving the Newbold pack around, the Legion soon started to find cracks in the defence and on 8 minutes, Jake Bates was sent barrelling through a gap in the defence to score the first try of the game. The ever reliable boot of Crow making it 7-0 after 8 minutes.

It was very much back and forward for the next 20 minutes as Newbold launched attack after attacked from deep in their own territory. Credit to the Legion back 3, they managed to cover well and neutralise any threats that the opposition had. Sticking to plan A, the Legion moved up the field and with the hefty midfield of Thomas and Cummings linking well, and opportunity came for the ball to be fizzed wide into the hands of hot stepper, Charlie Gamble who beat his winger on the outside and sneaked over the line in the corner... or did he... there seemed to be some confusion between the referee and linesman (Mr Brazendale). As Gamble scored, Brazendale got so excited that he threw his arms up in the air, thus indicating to the referee that there was a foot in touch! After a rather sheepish apology from the bearded wonder, he promised to not get excited and take his job seriously and the try was correctly awarded. With Crow unable to add the extras the score stood at 12-0 with a penalty being added just before half time taking the score to 15-0 to the Legion.

In a worryingly similar half time position to the Towcestrians game, Thomas, Kendall and Woodhouse half time debrief was to hold the focus and continue to stick to the game plan to avoid a comeback from Newbury who now had the slope and wind as their advantage. These words were duly ignored as a fumble off the kick off allowed Newbold a scrum in the Legion 22 and after several phases of knock knock, who's there, Newbold breached the Newport line for the first time and duly added the extras to take the score to 15-7. With this shock, the Legion regrouped and set about dismantling the opposition scrum which gave Crow and Thomas the platform to launch attack after

attack, deep into the Newbold 22. From one of the dominant scrums, Number 8, Jiminez broke and after drawing three defenders, threw some Macarena moves to dance through untouched under the posts. With Crow once again converting, the score stood at 22-7 and the Legion looked to push home their advantage.

A nervous 10 minutes followed with Newbold launching a daring comeback with some unusually poor tackling (yes I can admit it) from Thomas, Newbold coasted under the posts to reduce the arrears to 22-14. Another try quickly followed and with the score now 22-21, Newport were in severe danger of throwing a once commanding lead away once again.

It was at this point that Biggin had decided that he couldn't cope with Henry Holmes head between his legs in the scrum anymore so he implemented his plan and at the next tackle, he gave Mr Holmes a Glasgow kiss that Nicola Sturgeon would be proud off. With Holmes requiring stitches, Jack Jones entered the field and had a great debut.

Knowing that the scores were now tight, a penalty opportunity was converted by Crow, establishing a slight breathing space. Reacting to the Newbold pressure in the only way they now how, the Legion marched up the pitch and after Cummings drew three defenders, the ball was spun behind him to allow Gamble to cruise in for his second try of the afternoon. With Crow converting once again the Legion looked to be in charge at 32-21. After further infringements from Newbold, another penalty was converted; Newport looked home and dry with the score at 35-21.

With Newbold realising the inevitable, they started to slip of tackles and the Legion were able to add to the score line with a try from debutant, Jack Jones on 80 minutes which took the final score to 40-21 and a resounding win for the Legion after successfully fighting off a comeback from a strong opposition. Proving that they had learnt from the mistakes in the opening game, they will look to push on as they host Syston at home in a week's time.

Lot of standout performances including Gamble, Jiminez, Crow among others but this week's Man Of the Match had to go to Richard Biggin for doing what many have wanted to do for years and give Henry Holmes a good old nutting! Well done sir! Plenty in the tank with a bit of Bliiinding

TEAM:

C.Upsher, L.Kendall(VC), R.Biggin, C.Howells, H.Holmes, J.Bates, G.Gribble, J.Jiminez,

G.Crow, P.Thomas(C), T.Cummings, J.Pennells, R.Nordvang, C.Gamble, L.Stevens

BENCH: A.Brazendale, J.Jones, L.McLinton

MANAGER: Michael 'Trojan' Woodenhorse

Written by: Commodore Pierre Von Pistol III