

## **MATCH REPORT – 17 12 11 TORQUAY ATHLETIC V BUDE**

Although eventually running out as comfortable winners 42 - 0 with a battery of six second half tries Torquay showed definite signs of ring rust having not played since 19<sup>th</sup> November. They may also have been disrupted by the unavailability of regulars Alex Jeffery, Jon Oliver and Adam Chadwick.

For the home side the first half was a catalogue of basic errors and infringements, the latter being punished quite early on when visiting Oxfordshire Referee Scott Galbraith lost patience and yellow carded a player from each side.

Bude settled far quicker to their task and had opportunities to put points on the board from in front of the posts but winger Dan Pearce's two penalty efforts both fell short. It was not until the 15<sup>th</sup> minute that Torquay fleetingly visited the visitors '22 for the first time. Bude were galvanised by veteran ex- Launceston prop Ben Sobey and continued to dominate territory, aided by securing their own set piece ball with some degree of comfort. However despite good possession they rarely troubled the Tics line significantly.

On 20 minutes James Wood slotted a straight forward penalty and repeated the effort just before the break to send Athletic in front 6 – 0. Tics brightest spots during this turgid first period were when they tested the visitors out wide, notably on 35 minutes when Ollie Pitts and James Wood ran from deep and exchanged passes before Pitts was hauled down 2 metres short.

The half time team talk centred on better rucking to produce quicker ball and then to move it away from Bude's spoiling pack, which plan was immediately put into practice and sustained right up to full time. The change around was dramatic with all parts of the team playing their part, notably in the tight with prop Nick Gill and open side Paul Wood both prominent, the latter making his first Senior team appearance of the season after an outstanding recent display in the Extra Firsts.

Only 2 minutes in centre Matt Lloyd chipped ahead from his own half and capitalised on some luck when the ball was touched in flight enabling him to catch it on the full and weave his way to the line. 11 – 0.

Another 15 minutes passed before inside centre Richard Wood barged over with skipper Wood converting. Bude now tired visibly, and Tics confidence in their own handling game grew further producing four more tries, all scored out wide. First Ollie Pitts crossed, then on 65 minutes wing Tony McCarthy took a quick throw in on half way and the link player James Wood made ground before slick passing allowed Matt Lloyd to cross for his second try on the right.

McCarthy was then replaced to give a First team debut to Jack Keiller and within three minutes he dived to score wide out left. Finally a cross field up and under by home no.10 Matt Jackson was knocked on by a defender and the ball fell to a poaching Jack Keiller who repeated his previous score. Wood converted two out of the four scores from the touchline to register a 42 – 0 result.

Torquay Team: -

15 – James Wood, 14 – Ollie Pitts, 13 – Matt Lloyd, 12 – Richard Wood, 11 – Tony McCarthy, 10 – Matt Jackson, 9 – Tom Bovey,  
1 – Russ Morris, 2 – Simon Mabin, 3 – Nick Gill, 4 – Jon Arnold, 5 – Tom Whitford,  
6 – Richard Read, 7 - Paul Wood, 8 – Alex Smith.

Replacements: - Jon Woodhead, Jack Keiller, Dan Williams (all used).

League leaders North Petherton could only draw at winless bottom Club Tiverton and Torquay moved up one place to fourth after Bideford lost away to Truro 24 – 15. Tics on 43 points have a game in hand on leaders North Petherton and St. Austell (each on 48 points).

Next up are mid table Wellington (away on 17 / 12) who Tics beat at home in September by 49 - 12 in a sparkling display. However the Somerset side are a different proposition on their own patch having won all seven games there, including an 8 – 6 result against St. Austell. They also only lost narrowly away to top four side Okehampton 17 – 13. Any away support for the team in this last match before the Christmas break will be welcomed.

Meanwhile the Extra Firsts have not lost any of their past six Merit Table games which has seen the team climb the table to 3<sup>rd</sup> behind runaway front runners Brixham II's. They have a tough task next Saturday away to second placed Exmouth II's.

The Quins are tucked into mid table in Merit Table 2.

Neither side had a competitive game yesterday but the Quins visited Dartmouth in a friendly Club side game which ended 12 – 24 to Quins.

Other Merit Table score: Torquay Athletic Colts 5 v Ivybridge Colts 29

Written 11<sup>th</sup> December 2011