

MATCH REPORT – SATURDAY 14TH JANUARY 2012-
IVYBRIDGE 12 v TORQUAY ATHLETIC 38

Torquay Athletic beat Ivybridge for the third time this season on a dry, crisp afternoon at Cross-in Hand. Despite a number of enforced changes brought about by injuries and unavailability the Tics played throughout with a good momentum, eventually scoring six tries to run out comfortable winners. Solid defensive cohesion also meant that when necessary the visitors held out against occasional pressure to deny Ivybridge crossing the line.

The match started at a good tempo, generally sustained throughout, with the home side evidently smarting from a week earlier when becoming bottom Club Tiverton's first victim of the season.

For Tics Richard Read reverted to hooker for the unavailable Simon Mabin. After only a brief introduction to second team rugby Nigel Yeo was chosen to partner Tom Whitford (returning from injury) in the second row, whilst Jon Arnold returned to the No.8 berth with Jon Oliver at blindside and Ash Sharpe undertaking his 1st team pack debut at open side in place of the unavailable Paul Wood.

Outside Tony McCarthy slotted into inside centre and Matt Pascoe replaced the injured James Hill on the left wing.

After 14 minutes Torquay scored first playing down the slope: After a line out off the top Matt Jackson looped around to create space and breach the opposition midfield with James Wood cutting through after joining the line just inside the home 22'. 0 – 5.

Tics were moving the ball away from Ivybridge's big pack when the opportunity arose and on 22 minutes right wing Adam Chadwick scored in the corner after another line incursion by full back Wood and a long miss pass. 0 – 10.

Two minutes later Tics ventured offside at a line out and Adam Bradley reduced the arrears to 3 – 10. He repeated this effort from in front of the posts just before half time when East Devon Referee Marc Simon adjudged Matt Jackson's covering tackle to be high. However if anything the half time score of 6 – 10 slightly flattered Ivybridge.

Within three minutes of the restart Matt Lloyd deftly picked up on half way after his opposite number spilled the ball and he sped in under the posts for Wood to convert. 6 – 17. Ivybridge then started to apply some forward pressure playing down the slope. Tics were penalised offside at a scrum and the Ivy' forwards created a number of drives culminating with a penalty in front, which Bradley kicked to reduce the arrears to 9 –17. Ten minutes later the home side got their driving game going again with another penalty in front being their reward. Bradley elected to kick to bring Ivy within one touch down at 12 – 17.

At this point Tics had to reshuffle after Richard Read was forced off with a knock. Tight head Gareth Binmore had only just been replaced from the bench by Jon Woodhead and returned to the fray. The considerable Torquay support present now

witnessed probably one of the heaviest Tics front row's ever with Woodhead at hooker flanked by Binmore and Nick Gill. Dave Carpenter came on at No. 8 allowing Jon Arnold to move up to lock where he replaced Nigel Yeo.

On 65 minutes Tics were awarded a rare penalty within kicking distance but spurned the chance to establish an eight point cushion. Instead Jackson kicked into the corner and from the attacking line out Tics rumbled to the line where No. 9 Alex Jeffery burrowed under to touch down. Wood again converted giving Tics breathing space at 12 – 24 plus the benefit of a fourtry bonus point. Ivybridge were now playing catch up and on 68 minutes Tony McCarthy scored an interception try from half way, which Wood converted for 12 – 31.

To their credit Tics kept up the tempo and when Ivy got distracted by the start of a minor scuffle on the left touchline, after Tics were awarded a penalty, Alex Jeffery reacted quickly to spin the ball left to right and swift hands gave winger Adam Chadwick a diagonal run to the far corner. Wood was now in the groove and slotted the conversion from the touchline with the game's last kick. Final score 12 – 38.

This was a good all round performance from the boys and it would be unfair to single out individuals but the new centre pairing of Tony McCarthy and Matt Lloyd worked especially well and Alex Jeffery's quick service was instrumental in Tics backs scoring five of the tries.

Tics remain in fourth place in the table after leaders St. Austell retained top spot by winning 28 – 10 at home to Devonport Services. There were also resounding bonus point victories for second placed North Petherton by 74 – 7 V Bude and third place Okehampton who thrashed St Ives at home by 104 – 3. Fifth placed Bideford became the only side this term to lower Wellington's colours in Somerset by winning 7 – 13.

Next week Tics are at home to Kingsbridge, a side now improving after a poor start to the campaign when missing several key players. Indeed Kings' recently held leaders St. Austell at home 22 – 22. Tics won by 22 – 30 at High House on 1st October but Kingsbridge always seem to raise their game against Torquay, whose win in October was only their first in three attempts V Kingsbridge since returning to Western Counties.

Torquay Team:

15 – James Wood (Captain), 14 – Adam Chadwick, 13 – Matt Lloyd, 12 – Tony McCarthy, 11 – Matt Pascoe, 10 – Matt Jackson, 9 Alex Jeffery,
1 – Nick Gill, 2 – Richard Read, 3 – Gareth Binmore, 4 – Nigel Yeo, 5 – Tom Whitford, 6 – Jon Oliver, 7 – Ash Sharpe, 8 – Jon Arnold.

Replacements: Jon Woodhead, Dave Carpenter, Jack Keiller (all played).

Other results:

Merit table 2 – Torquay Quins 14 V Ivybridge II's 40.

Merit Table Devonport Services Colts 41 v Torquay Athletic Colts 7 - a very strong Services outfit coached by ex- Tics player Sam Samuels beat a young Tics side shorn of several backs..