

Wirral 9 – 16 Widnes (H) League, Saturday 29 March 2008

Well the excellent free scoring run has come to an end due to a combination of a couple of weeks without a game, appalling weather & a very determined Widnes team who had also been on a good run recently plus they had revenge on their minds for the early season defeat at home by Wirral.

Wirral played down the slope in the 1st half but were unable to turn their few chances into points except for a couple of penalties kicked by Danny Harvey – even when they did score it was missed due to the referee's attention being diverted by a melee 20 metre back from the line. The Widnes team was built for the conditions with their standoff & inside centre as big as the Wirral 2nd row. So as the 1st half progressed they plus their forwards came more into the game as they played the conditions better than Wirral.

However the Wirral supporters – a large number considering the appalling weather – were confident that despite only being 6-0 up at half-time their team would win because of the success they were having all round the field & at the lineouts & the errors were due to the couple of weeks without a game.

Then the wheels started to come off with decisions going against them, silly mistakes in front of the posts early in the 2nd half allowed the Widnes kicker to bring his team level by converting 2 penalties & raise his team's morale.

Wirral were also given a taste of how difficult it is to get out of the bottom left hand corner of Twickenham when the weather conditions & decisions are going against you.

The decisive score came after 20 minutes when a knock on by Wirral just inside the Widnes half saw the ball quickly transferred to the Widnes left wing for him to speed in at the corner. (6-11). Then after 28 minutes the same player scored another try when a clearing kick by the standoff to the left hand touch was chased by the winger for him to catch the Wirral defence offguard, collect the ball & score in the same corner (6-16).

The Wirral coaches rang the changes but the loss of Craig Harvey with a shoulder injury didn't help their cause & the control at the lineouts also drifted away which meant they were unable to launch any sweeping moves via their speedier backs.

The last score of the game came via another penalty kicked by Danny Harvey (9-16) which was followed by intense pressure on the Widnes line but excellent defence & use of the offside line by the visitors eventually saw them home.

All in all a big disappointment for Wirral players & spectators alike especially as a victory would have seen them in 5th position instead of 7th - with a chance of finishing 4th. Two fixtures remain, both of them difficult games against Bowdon (H, 12th April) & Wigan (A, 19th April) & if both are won & some surprise results occur in other games we could still finish 4th.

So we are nearly at the end of a rollercoaster of a season when it comes to results & performances but once again youngsters have showed the club's future on the playing field is still looking good. It is sad to see the 2nd team not having as successful a season as they have had for the past couple of seasons but the 3rd team have done well in their league. Let's not forget our players are amateurs & do this for 'fun' & at no small financial cost to themselves.

Without currently a game to watch at the club this Saturday let's all turn up on Sunday to watch the undefeated Junior Colts play their Northern Region Final.

Leigh Bennett