

Wirral 2's match report.

Leigh 3's (home) 22/09/07.

Yet another huge pack for the Wirral 2's to compete against. After the team photo and a lacklustre warm-up, Wirral started the game as if still smiling for the camera. Only last ditch defending from full back Bennett and wing Luxton prevented Leigh taking an extremely early lead. However it wasn't too long before Leigh managed to go over for the opening try. (converted. **0 - 7**). Further Leigh forward pressure resulted in a penalty being awarded for offside, posts nominated but missed. This set the tone for the majority of the afternoon with the referee's whistle dominating the game. The resulting stop – start game did not suit Wirral's style of play and gave the larger Leigh pack time to catch their breath at the breaks. Wirral used the ball well to get back into the game with a break down the right, and great support from Col Hughes saw him go over under the posts. (conversion successful **7-7**). With the forward battle recommencing the Wirral forwards put their bodies on the line. Unfortunately this resulted in captain of the day, Graham Phelan, having to leave the field injured after 25 minutes, Iain Ledner replacing. The change of player and captain, (Patrick Granby taking the reigns) unsettled Wirral for a while, and allowed Leigh to pressurise the Wirral line. Eventually after some resolute defending, the pressure told giving Leigh their second try. (converted. **7 - 14**). This score seemed to wake Wirral as they started to use their pace and quick recycle of the ball to gain ground. Only with the odd pass going astray or trying to force the offload ruining the end result. However the ref's whistle returned giving Leigh numerous penalties to enable them to get into kicking range, successfully kicking a penalty just before half time. (**7 - 17**).

Wirral began the second half trying again to run the large Leigh pack round the park. Tom Clegg came on for Adam Davis, with Col Hughes moving to 2nd row. Sam Broadbent's kicking improved and Wirral ended up with a line-out in the Leigh 22. Although overthrown Iain Ledner caught the ball and ran through the Leigh no. 10 to score. (conversion scored. **14 - 17**). Wirral then continued to play open rugby, but again were trying to force the offload, and with "lazy" or blatantly slow running back from the Leigh forwards, Wirral passes failed to go to hand. The Leigh players also found themselves unable to keep up with play and went to ground feigning injury, to which the referee stopped the game on a few occasions to treat!! They were still able to play on following a glug of water and a breather. The curse of the Wirral captaincy took another victim in Pat, Gouldie coming into back row and Col Hughes moving to centre. The captaincy problem left no option but to allow Gaskell's mouth to do something positive!! It seemed to be a tonic as Col Hughes, having another outstanding game, took on what seemed to be the majority of the Leigh team, running through tackles, and around half the length of the pitch to score a brilliant individual try. (converted. **21 - 17**). The Leigh pack then decided it was time to stick the ball up their jumpers and move into the Wirral half. The referee provided the onlookers with entertainment by giving Leigh the greatest amount of time with advantage, even when it was kicked away, penalising Wirral constantly. Again stout defence looked to be winning the day for Wirral, but when Iain Ledner had to leave the field with a shoulder injury Wirral were reduced to 14 men. This was a telling factor as Leigh scrambled over the line in the corner, much to Wirral's annoyance as the Leigh player crawled along the floor at the base of a ruck. **Final score 21-22.**

A very disappointing result having played some good open rugby, but being prevented from producing continuity due to Leigh's slowing down of play and the ref's whistle. Outstanding performances from Col Hughes and Jason Green. We have another home game next week against a team relegated from the Premiership so need to be at our best. Lets put the effort in at training, and deliver a result befitting the Wirral 2's.

Andy Bell.