

## **Senior Colts – Match Report Sunday 18 November 2007**

Newcastle(Staffs) 29 - Wirral 0

Wirral travelled to Newcastle (Staffs) on what can only be described as possibly the most miserable day we have encountered so far this season, not only reflecting the score but also the weather. It was biting cold, wet, snowy and with a pitch that resembled a mud wrestling ring rather than a Rugby pitch. However, this will not detract from the fact that Newcastle (playing on the same pitch) out-ran and out-muscled Wirral, and took the game by the horns. Given the conditions, their running with ball-in-hand was a credit to them, their aggression around the rucks and mauls caused Wirral no end of problems. Coupled with the fact that Wirral don't travel well, it was no surprise when Wirral conceded an early try which Newcastle duly converted. I can't give a blow by blow account as my hands never left my pockets but at half time the game looked to be out of reach for another Wirral come back 29 - 0 at the turn round.

The Wirral followers and players were looking rather lonely figures reflecting on a poor first half and dreading what was to follow. From the restart, however, Wirral woke up following captain Dave Doneo's half time talk (which was a credit to him given the playing conditions) and sound advice from Mark Dyas. From the kick-off, Wirral pressed the Newcastle line with waves of brute force and solo runs, but could not break Newcastle's defence. With Wirral encamped in the Newcastle 22 and their supporters shouting for a try, the feeling was it was moments from coming as Dave Doneo, leading from the front with pick-and-drive tactics. Newcastle defended for all there worth. Sam Byrne crashed over but the ref adjudged held-up. From the scrum Wirral kept pounding with Matty Brown falling just short. Newcastle looked to have twice as many players on the pitch with two/three players tackling every Wirral player. For 25 minutes Wirral pressured and Newcastle defended, but when they managed to get their hands on the ball it was hoofed up field with all players sloshing after it. At this point it became obvious Wirral would not be scoring today and with the game now being played in the middle of the park with both sets of players passing the ball to the opposition it was difficult to tell who was who; the referee duly put everyone on a high by blowing for full time. Both teams and supporter gave each other a rousing cheer when the ref blew and everyone headed off to the bar to thaw out.

A nice touch by the Newcastle coaches saying the score did not reflect the game, another fine one played in a good spirit despite poor weather conditions.

Supplied by Mike Byrne – for Wirral Senior Colts.