

## Match Report: 24<sup>th</sup> February 2008

### Wirral u8's v Marple (Home)

**Game A: Wirral 7 Marple 2**

**Try scorers: Sam Wood (2), Will Tyrer, Sam Gregory (2), Taylor Christian (2)**

Overall, Wirral were in control from beginning to end, although in parts once again tagging was weak. When tagging was weak it was as a result of Wirral being slow to re-group in on-side positions allowing strong runners in the opposition to come at them and gain ground. In fairness though, when we got it right our organisation forced the runners sideways in an effort to find a space that often wasn't there.

In fits and starts our support play was good and the running straight, although in both matches a significant amount of Wirral tries came about as a result of a handful of players taking the game by the scruff of the neck, running straight at the defence and opting for last minute jinks and swerves to score some fantastic solo efforts.

From the free pass on the touch line we twice made text book runs, taking the ball from touch and into midfield at the 45 degree angle before straightening up when closed down and jinking through the defence – top stuff. Those who did score quite often found themselves crossing the line on their own, yards ahead of any supporting players. From a technical perspective, our support play needs to be more consistent so that in the contact game our runners don't make ground only to become isolated and end up in a turnover situation when tackled. Hence the continuing work on setting the ruck, and the seal and spin.

The message for the players is two-fold;

- ✓ In close hard fought games of contact rugby support players contribute more to try scoring than aspiring soloists. Therefore, when off the ball and in attack **SUPPORT - SUPPORT - SUPPORT**.
- ✓ Also, when not in possession **TACKLE - TACKLE - TACKLE**. Or, in our case **TAG - TAG - TAG**. Sustained pressure when defending can force the attacking side to go back, or sideways. It can force the ball carrier to end up isolated behind their own players and create turnover ball as the opposition panic, or commit an infringement such as a forward pass, or knock-on. Something we witnessed to good effect a few weeks back and in parts today.

Good game, good effort, great score.

**Game B: Wirral 5 Marple 4**

**Try scorers: Sam Wood (2), Conor Anderson, Will Tyrer, Taylor Christian**

By this stage Marple had perhaps shaken off the cob-webs and tribute should be paid to the hard work they put-in. They brought only eight players who played in two games back to back and who put up a spirited display in the second match limiting Wirral to a narrow victory. They should go back up the M56 with heads high following this match.

This could have ended in defeat for the Wirral side as Wirral at times opted to ignore the benefits of running straight, with soloists reverting to becoming isolated as well as showing elements of the running from side to side game. For the first time in a long time this caused the referee to invoke his u8's club rule that;

***'No Wirral player shall run in a straight line from touch line to touch line, and in a line that is parallel with and therefore not in the general direction of the try-line'***.

Tactical substitutions were made when the result was in doubt but by the end of the morning all players got in some good game time, and Wirral came away with a respectable try-count of 12 – 6.

Each and every Wirral player put in great effort and tribute should once again be paid to the fact that player's and parents alike are braving the northern hemisphere winter to put out two full u8's sides week in and week out.

Many thanks.

Next week training.