

Old Georgians RFC vs Old Amplefordians

Club Captain Chris Hanson

On the 20th February, Old Georgians RFC took on Old Amplefordians in a top of the table clash at the college. Taking in to account OG's recent poor form, this had added significance in the hunt for promotion. A win for the hosts would close the gap at the top and undoubtedly boost the confidence.

With the weather similar to the reverse fixture, where the two teams drew 17-17 in poor conditions, the match was going to be won and lost up front in the forwards. Kicking off in to the wind, OG's started at a high tempo and took the initiative up front, keeping the heavy OA pack on the back foot in the scrums. Not only did the forwards provide a platform in the set piece, but they carried with extra vigour, the returning Joe Deal epitomizing this with some powerful carries.

Fly half for the day Alex Willis played in the right areas, allowing OG's to win a penalty 35m out, which Chris Hanson duly converted to take the hosts in to a 3-0 lead. With some strong ball carriers in the pack and the centres in particular, OA's reacted well and really tested the hosts defence. They threw all they had in the first half and were rewarded with a penalty of their own which was converted, making the score 3-3 at HT.

The feeling inside the OG camp was positive as we now had the wind on our back in the second half. Defence was strong and the pitch had partially dried out, giving the backline in particular more license to test the OA defence out wide. This is exactly what we did, with centres Harry Samuels and Aidan Lowes attacking as well as they were defending, against a rather large centre pairing!

The first and only try of the game then came from a likely source; Francesco Grosso. With the set piece dominating in the second half also, a well worked lineout allowed Eoghan Sweeney at scrum half to peel off and find Grosso, who ran in for another vital score in the corner. Hanson had found some rhythm off the tee at the right time and converted from the tight angle to take the score to 10-3.

The next score was crucial and again it went to Old Georgians, with more clever rugby resulting in a penalty from the touchline which Hanson also squeezed in. 13-3 with ten minutes remaining.

Amplefordians fought back with an attacking onslaught, throwing everything at the OG defence which had remained resolute throughout. Once Luke Buckingham had held up one attempt of a try after numerous phases, OA's settled for the losing bonus point by converting an easy penalty to finish the

game. This pays dividends to the strong defence that day which would not be breached.

The boys were very proud of their performance in front of another excellent crowd, which thereafter closed the gap from first place in the league to two points. Special mention goes to the evergreen prop Ben Wheeler, who won man of the match after an inspired performance in both the scrum and in defence. The race is on for promotion and the lads next match is against Cranleigh on the 5th March. Support as always is massively appreciated.