



Ilkley Rugby Club

Match report

Saturday 25th October 2003

Ilkley R.F.C. vs North Ribblesdale R.U.F.C.

Venue: Stacks Field, Ilkley

Yorkshire League Division 1

Result: Ilkley 25 pts North Ribblesdale 22pts



Ilkley bull's eye in dual of the Dales

This absorbing though at times frustrating and untidy game was full of the blood and guts you would expect of a Dales derby between these two old rivals and friends.

The game swung first in the direction of the men in blue from Settle and back to the Dalesmen from Ilkley in white. Ilkley were on top in the vital central part of the game though the heart specialists can expect to see a growing list this Monday as the last frenetic five minutes could easily have seen the game ripped away from the home side.

At the very end two kicks from the Dalesmens' own line were charged down. The first from Tom Maclean was fortuitously picked up by the marvellous Pete Small but his desperate kick was charged down too, even more fortuitously going dead to bring an end to the game. Moments before that heart stopping moment Rib's John Moimoi had attempted to fling out a winning try pass that had totally missed its target receiver when, had he continued with his searing break, he might well have scored himself.

Come what may the result evidenced the balance of power in the game and both sets of spectators agreed that the result was fair.

In true Ilkley style an 18 - 8 lead five minutes into the second half was let slip to allow Rib back to 18 - 15 before the Dalesmen edged 25 - 15 ahead and, with their grip on the game tightening, they let it go again to finish just three points clear at 25 - 22.

With five or six minutes to go, a ten point lead and the ball in their possession inside the Rib 22 there was a need to slow it down, play keep ball and maintain field position. But that's not in the Dalesmens' psyche. A misplaced kick deep in Rib's 22 presented possession to Rib.

Their strong and fleet-footed backs ran it out from deep. Ilkley defended well and were relieved to have a lineout on the Rib 10 metre line. A short throw to Small at the front would have been the obvious decision. But no, the long throw wasn't straight and then the last couple of minutes horror show was in motion. Tuli Makaafi was only just back on the field having suffered a yellow card for impeding the Rib chaser as a quickly taken penalty bounced back off the woodwork to concede a penalty try to get Rib back to 18 - 15.

He had only just been readmitted to the field of play when Ian McCaul suffered the same fate for illegally stopping a Rib onslaught on his own 22. Rib took the scrum option and worked a well-taken try from number 8 Mick Carr. This made the score 25 - 22 and the Dalesmen had to survive 10 minutes with 14 men on the park.

The game had started ominously for the home side as an Ilkley lineout straight from the kick-off was lost and whipped out wide. Andy Matthews slipped on the wet surface and left a whole down the right for winger Mathew Dakin to sail into and score in the first minute. 0 - 5.

With that prevailing westerly getting up the euphoria of York the week before was ebbing away.

Rib were gifted a couple of penalties and missed one kick at goal before they began to feel the pressure rising from the men in white. They kicked straight out giving Ilkley a lineout on the 22. Good work by Kirk Arundale won them a penalty and a lineout close in. A great drive saw them win a penalty in front which Pete Shanks converted but in doing so pulled a thigh muscle and was forced to leave the field. Simon Smith replaced him. 3 - 5.

Rib missed another penalty goal attempt but kept the pressure on Ilkley. A scrum was illegally wheeled by Ilkley and this time the kick was good. 8 - 3 to Rib, 30 minutes gone.

Now the Ilkley colours were hoisted as Rib began to concede ground and penalties. The first, from half way took them to the Rib 22. The second to 2 metres out. From there the Ilkley pack is deadly and this time the drive was unstoppable as big Aussie Charlie Scott claimed the touchdown. Phil Howell obliged with the conversion 10 - 8.

Ilkley lost prop Josh Cockerham to a sore shoulder allowing veteran Andrew Merkin to come on in the middle of the front row.

Straight after half time Howell added another goal to make it 13 - 8. Then big Jon Hutchinson set up McCaul to score after great work by the forwards. Howell's kick was just wide but his side had a valuable 18 - 8 lead, and were even looking as though they could take control of the game.

Then Rib replied, probably with more than a little good fortune. From a harmless position just over half way Ilkley were penalised for offside. Rib knew they had to fashion a score and took the kick quickly. A speculative kick through Ilkley lines rebounded off the post

protector. Makaafi was deemed by Mr Staines to have illegally the impeded the Rib follow-up. The penalty try was awarded. 18 - 15.

As the Dalesmen pressed Rib's line Smith suffered a bad leg injury forcing drastic reorganisation. Neil Spence came on and McCaul went into centre.

Ilkley stuck to their task as, first skipper Stuart Vincent almost went in, and from the resulting scrum the ball was well worked through several phases and a lineout to put Pete Small in on the left for a great try. Howell's kicking was getting better as it sailed over for the vital 25 - 15, 10 point lead.

Then came bedlam. Those breathtaking last ten minutes had the crowd with hearts in mouths but that welcome whistle of the excellent Mr Staines halted proceedings just in time to ensure Ilkley's winning run continued, but only just!

This week the Dalesmen entertain high flying Sheffield, that once great club now attempting to climb back up the echelons of rugby. The names of Alan Old, Bill Reichwald, Brian Firth, George Kirkpatrick, Steve Newsome, Mike Gange, Chris Sharpe and others are fresh in the minds of some not so old rugby officinados. Kick-off is at 3 p.m.

Images from this game and previous games are available to view/purchase from www.ruggerpix.com

