

**Match Report - Saturday 8 March 2008
London & South East Division 2 North
The Reeves
Snakey Lane**

Staines RFC 45 Bury St Edmunds 22

Every remaining League game for Staines Rugby Club is a cup final and a do or die affair, as the tension continues to mount in a three horse race for promotion back to London 1, with all the contenders winning once more on Saturday and a solitary point splitting the teams, there is now a welcome break in the league program, when Staines will hope to regroup and resolve their injury situation, before a final 3 game assault course to come, together with a possible playoff match at the end of April, to determine their league status for next season.

Bury St Edmunds started the game brightly, throwing everything at Staines, they are a mid table side, who have acquitted themselves well this season, without suffering any major defeat along the way, nevertheless, one suspected that if Staines weathered this opening period of play, they would eventually overpower their opponents, as the intensity of their play could not be sustained.

This was to prove the case, on 15 minutes, when the Staines scrumhalf, Richard Scott made a 30 metre break, deep into the visitors half, the move was stopped illegally by the Bury defence and Staines elected to find touch from the resultant penalty, a driving maul from the lineout, propelled prop Giles Walker and lock Junior Harrison through a gap in the visitors defence and they forced their way across the try line for the opening score, the conversion failed.

Bury St Edmunds were still very competitive at this stage of the game and quickly replied with a penalty goal, however, the match was soon to be finished as a close encounter, when Staines embarked on a 20 minute passage of play which totally overwhelmed their opponents.

With the Staines backline coming more into the game, wing Andy Turner was put through the hole by number 8, Eddie Jones, made good yardage before the ball was recycled to lock Junior Harrison who scored under the posts, the try was converted by fly half Dave Knill.

Andy Turner was again prominent in Staines third try, breaking down the blindside before feeding wing forward, Luciano Silvera, who threw a delightful dummy to create space for himself and score, Knill added the extra points.

Turner made further inroads into Bury territory, bringing prop Giles Walker into the move as they worked the blindside, Walker, who, alongside his other prop forward, Leonard Liebenburg, had an outstanding game, took the ball on, committing a Bury player to the tackle, before offloading to hooker Stefan Myburgh, who was lurking outside him and who scored unopposed, Staines were now ahead by 24 points to 3 and close to sealing the game.

The Staines hooker scored his second try of the match shortly thereafter, when following a copy book tap down from the lineout, Myburgh took the ball at speed, running round the tail to score a 'training ground' try, the conversion was successful.

The home side wrapped up the half and the game, when they score just before the break, following a charge down of a Bury clearance kick by Staines fly half, Dave Knill, to score under the posts, then converting his own try, Staines 38 Bury St Edmunds 3, at half time.

The second half witnessed a Bury St Edmunds fight back, although chasing a lost cause, they outscored the home side, who, bizarrely, received 3 yellow cards during the half and at one time were playing with thirteen men, the visitors scored 2 tries during the periods when Staines had

players in the sin bin, nevertheless, Staines again crossed the line, with the scores at 38 to 10, when replacement hooker, Joe Cooke, scored his first try for the club, when he was driven over by his forwards to score a converted touchdown, increasing the deficit to 45 points to 10.

Staines, following the spate of yellow cards and giving their replacements valuable game time, found continuity and motivation in short supply, the visitors adding another 12 points, before the referee called time, with the final score of Staines 45 Bury St Edmunds 22, although Staines ran in 7 tries in another emphatic win, they will have to tighten up on discipline in the remaining fixtures, when more difficult encounters may prove to be closer affairs.

Overall, the Staines side look both well prepared and in good form, for their remaining fixtures, team spirit and confidence are high, the next big test comes on the 29 March, when Staines travel to a local derby match against a strong Ruislip side and Chingford entertain Tring, in a must win game, for the 2 fellow promotion contenders, the final outcome of the season may be clearer after 'Super Saturday'.

Tony Brightwell
President.