

Match Report - Saturday 23 February 2008

Staines Mucky Ducks V Chinnor TVIL League Div B

Introduction

This was our furthest away game of the season, so we decided to organise a mini-bus for the occasion. We knew that we were in for a hard game as on many of our away fixtures this season the opposition has regularly used ringers and Chinnor didn't disappoint!

The day got off to a bad start when we arrived at Chinnor. The bags etc were being off loaded when Vincett realised that someone had forgotten to put his kit on the bus. Vincett decided that it was an appropriate moment to throw his toys out of the pram and throw a tantrum that a 6-year-old would have been proud of. Luckily for Vincett the team were able to find him some odds and sods to play in.

The Match

The game kicked off with Staines receiving and returning the ball with interest. Within the first few minutes we could see that Chinnor's game plan was to keep the ball in the forwards and utilise the weight and experience of their massive pack.

After about 5 minutes of the game Staines had a line out just inside Chinnor's half. Wilson as usual hit his man with pinpoint accuracy, Pies out jumped his man and the forwards gained five metres through a driving maul. The ball was then released to the Staines backs with Bear taking a crash ball smashing into the opposition taking 2 men to stop him. The forwards recycled the ball quickly allowing our scrum half to deliver quick ball to fly half James Knill. He span a beautiful long pass to Vincett who beat a couple of men and delivered a well timed pass to the fast approaching Baker who then finished off a nice team try in the corner, 5-0 to STAINES. The conversion was missed but we had got off to a great start and confidence was high.

The next 10 minutes of the game was centred around forward play, at this point the Chinnor forwards were starting to get the upper hand, constantly mauling our forwards back 10 – 15 metres at a time. When the Chinnor backs finally received the ball they either chose to kick and pen us back in our own half or to run back to the safety of their forwards. It certainly wasn't pretty stuff from Chinnor but it was effective.

Half way through the 1st half the Chinnor number 6 decided to clean his boots on our Prop's (Gibbo) head. The ref saw the incident and took appropriate action producing a yellow card, giving the number 6 a 10-minute rest!

This woke us up and spurred the Staines forwards into action, with Jonsey continuing his transformation from hooker to flanker stealing lots of the Chinnor ball at the break down using a combination of legal and illegal ball pinching.

HALF TIME Chinnor 0 Staines 5

At half time we replaced second row Rico with Kev McMahon and winger Ash Willingale with Elliot.

The 2nd half began in the same fashion as the 1st half had ended, Chinnor keeping the ball in the safety of the pack and the Staines backs being starved of possession.

10 minutes in Gibbo was replaced by Mutters who was eagerly awaiting his chance to impress.

Staines started to compete more furiously at the breakdown and started to get the better of Chinnor's bigger pack. (All season Staines have worn down and dominated far bigger and more experienced packs.) John on his debut for the ducks went on several charges up field and was well supported by the rest of the pack, enabling the Staines backs to start receiving quick ball. A well worked move by the Staines back gave Elliot the chance to outpace his winger gaining 20 metres and only being stopped from scoring by a great tackle into touch from the Chinnor fullback.

Daz our number 8 had to come off due to the fact that he had been choked out by one of the Chinnor forwards. He was replaced by Kev Crammer, which saw a slight reshuffle of the pack with the ever-impressive Henry moving from 2nd row to number 8.

Another great run from Elliot was only stopped by a Chinnor player obstructing him off the ball after a great chip and chase. Unfortunately the ref didn't see the foul!

Chinnor now started to release the ball to their backs in an attempt to snatch victory. Chinnor had wave upon wave of attacks repelled by the formidable Staines defence. Bear who was eager to get his hands on the ball put in some very big hits including what looked like a powerful dump/ spear tackle. With the Bear in this mood it looked like nothing was going to get through.

But Chinnor upped their game again and started getting closer and closer to scoring. The forwards managed to drive over the Staines line, only for a great last-ditch dive by Mutters to get his body under the ball before it was grounded. The ref, who was having a good game, was well positioned to call no try.

The game entered the final 10 minutes and both teams looked capable of scoring. Tony Evans coming off his wing at pace received a long miss-pass from Knillsey and came within a couple of metres of scoring, unfortunately the support wasn't there quickly enough and a penalty was awarded to Chinnor for holding on.

Chinnor now started running the ball from everywhere and good inter-linking between the backs and forwards resulted in one of their players breaking free. It looked like he was certain to score but from out of nowhere Kev Crammer put in a superb tackle to save a certain try.

There was just 2 minutes left on the clock and we thought we had held out but we were wrong. Another rumble from the Chinnor pack saw them score in the corner.

Chinnor 5 – Staines 5. This was certainly a big blow but like we have done all season we didn't let it get us down, the boys under the post showed great attitude and we all said calmly to one another that we will all charge the conversion kick then go up the other end and score. The vital conversion was missed and the question was asked to the ref about how long was left. The answer was that from the kick off when the ball goes dead that's it.

Bear took the kick off and produced a beauty of a re-start, hanging the ball high allowing Jonsey to leap like a salmon and gather the ball. The ball was recycled and Tony found himself on the wing in space. He beat a couple of tackles then came within inches of being put into touch. The forwards once again produced the goods retaining possession, which allowed the ball to be spun out to the Staines backs. Quick interchange of passing saw the ball reach Vincett 30 metres out. He handed off his opposite centre with a typically powerful hand off, which saw his opponent end up on his backside. He then out-sprinted the remaining defence to score in the corner. The conversion was missed but it didn't matter - the game was over. Final score **Chinnor 5 – Staines 10.**

Conclusion

Another great display from Staines, a feature of our play was great defence and attitude. We are now close to winning the TVIL league. We have a title decider against Reading at the Reeves on the 15th March. If we show this level of commitment then we could well be crowned league winners.

It's a good time at the Reeves as we go into the final part of the season the 1st team and ourselves have the chance to win our respective leagues and gain promotion. With a bit of hard work and a little bit of luck this will happen, then we can all have a great double celebration at our club dinner!