

Newport RUFC Under 16 Match report
Sunday 2nd November 2008

Newport U 16 12-17 Lichfield U 16

What was a very clean, hard fought and exciting rugby match was unfortunately overshadowed by a nasty facial injury to Newport winger Chris Massey. The whole squad's best wishes go to him and we all hope he has a speedy recovery.

As is Newport's usual style, they started the game slowly and allowed Lichfield to take an early lead. A speculative kick ahead gave the visitors a foot hold in Newport territory and when a second kick was not recovered, Lichfield's scrum half was able to pounce on the loose ball and score wide out.

The familiar pattern to games then unfolded as Newport's pack started to dominate their opposite numbers and possession. Time after time good field position and excellent attacks were wasted as wrong options were taken and players went for glory rather than letting the ball do the work.

Eventually, pressure told and a charging run by Sam Moysey blasted a hole in the Lichfield defence and he dived over under the posts. Hayden Strong knocked over the conversion and Newport held a 7-5 half time lead.

Newport maintained their momentum and dominated the start of the second half. Outside centre Tom Saunders showed all his strength and skill to break through the visitors defence and time after time, last gasp tackles and wrong options from Newport let Lichfield off the hook.

Eventually, simple rugby and quick use of the ball put Eddie Foulkes clear on the right wing for him to dive over in the corner.

Newport looked certain to build on their 12-5 lead, but they relaxed and allowed Lichfield back into the game. The Staffordshire side kept the ball tight and made in-roads into the Newport half. However, Newport regularly repelled these attacks and always looked likely to score when their backs got the ball. Despite this, wrong options meant that the backs saw insufficient ball to allow Newport to pull clear.

The inevitable happened and Lichfield scored a breakaway try to close the gap to 12-10 and then late on another series of drives from their pack put their flanker over under the posts and the conversion gave them a five point cushion.

Finally, Newport showed some urgency and could have come away with a win at the death, but good tackling denied winger George Taylor after another Saunders' break.

A frustrating loss, after a win looked in their grasp for much of the second half, but the lads will learn from this tight game and will face Hereford in next week's North Midlands cup with some points to prove.