

**Newport RUFC Under 16 Match report**  
**Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> October 2008**

**Newport U 16      17-14      Bridgnorth U 16**

Newport under 16 side played with far greater intensity than they have before and this improved performance was justly rewarded with a narrow win over their Bridgnorth rivals.

Both sides tried to play high tempo and open rugby, despite the early conditions and there was a very high standard of play throughout the game. For those watching, the game was enthralling as it ebbed and flowed. However, it was the home side that had the edge overall.

From the kick off Newport took the initiative and dominated both possession and territory. However, the backs lacked a directness necessary to open up a strong Bridgnorth defence and after the initial pressure, Newport eased off and allowed the visitors back into the game.

From a succession of rucks close to the line Bridgnorth were able to drive over for the first try, which was easily converted under the posts. These were the only scores of the first half.

The second half started as the first with Newport in the ascendancy and after the ball had been moved wide quickly, Velcho Alexandrov followed up his own chip ahead to out pace the defence and score.

Unlike in the first half Newport didn't drop their game and fly half Jack Baker used a mixture of wide play and pop passes to forwards to keep Bridgnorth's defence on edge throughout the game. It was this preparation work that enabled the fly half to throw the dummy that carved open the defence. Baker then showed balance, pace, strength and determination to score a wonderful try under the posts, which Velcho converted.

It then looked for all that Newport would pull away from the visitors and inflict a heavy defeat, but credit to Bridgnorth, they never backed off and were always a threat. However, it was from loose play and some weak tacking that their full back was able to run half the length of the field to score under the posts and put them ahead 12-14.

Newport were not to be denied victory and set up camp in their opponents half. Time after time they lost their composure and gave up good positions, but it was a period of sustained pressure and a good decision by scrum half Nathan Potter to go blind that saw Jonno Wilson bulldoze over and seal the win.

This game saw the Newport youngster take a large step forward in their rugby education, but they will need to increase the intensity of their play much further in order to truly fulfil their potential.