

2nd XV v Stonyhurst. Won 25-5

Always a stunning place to visit and the mile long drive never fails to impress. Great to catch up with a former member of staff in Owen Hughes who was in charge of their 2nd XV. The downside of playing at Stonyhurst is that the pitches are a fair distance from the changing rooms and the players lose their focus by the start of the match.

The first half was actually a very enjoyable 0-0 draw. Stonyhurst had a very big front five and big No 8. Due to injury and unavailability we had a very mobile pack which lacked size. Jason Cheng and Kang Guo Benson as well as Remi Boynton lacked size and bulk but made up for it with their tackle count and bravery. At the breakdown Joe Birchall was prominent and slowed down Stonyhurst ball. Tayib Majumber was, as we have become accustomed, the bravest player on the field before having to leave the field with a nasty knee injury.

His replacement was Damian Riding who normally plays in the backs but who thrived within the forward pack. Frank Burgess, skipper for the day, kept the boys going.

It has to be said that by half time the lads had woken up and started to match the Stonyhurst physicality. At the start of the second half good pressure on Stonyhurst led to two penalties within a few minutes which injected confidence throughout, and the ball started to move along the back line. The backs orchestrated by Josh Burrows started making in roads and it wasn't long bore Lucas Atherton and Sam Davies moved the ball quickly to Sam Mercer to sail over the line. Sam Davies had his kicking boots on and soon took his personal tally to 10 when he converted Theo Weatherill's try in the right hand corner. The best was yet to come when the ball was passed quickly to Daniel Booth who blasted over the line on the opposite side. It was pleasing that Ridgeway and Rigby contributed well but couldn't quite get over the try line.

The man of the match goes to Seyi Oladje who was drafted in at late notice. He started quietly but over the course of the match was more prominent in the loose and with ball in hand. An impressive debut performance.

This was a tricky fixture which in the end was well navigated but the score doesn't really reflect how close the match was for long periods.