

Wellington 3rds Home (Huish) 11th February 2012.

After the forced 2 week layoff through cancelled games it was good to get 80 minutes of rugby in before the titanic battle next week v Chard. No disrespect to Wellington, but when they arrived with 10 players.....we leant them 5 and played the fixture as a friendly.

With 24 available not for the first time this season, the extra's down for the day played for Wellington; Chris's mates Knobby and Johnno with Hodges, Josh and Ross Hunter (on a day out from Taunton)

The game started late and on Huish Park as Wyvern's cricket outfield had not quite thawed from the freezing weather overnight.

The Wyvern starting line up was the now legendary; Lawton, Grant and Harding. Porcas and the slender Ben Goddard in 2nd row. With Collier, Capt Copper and Richards making up the back row.

The three quarters were a mixed bag of youth and experience. Peter Pan at 9 with Frodo at 10. Hodge and Billy Whizz in the centres, Horsfall and yet another guest, Josh Perein on the wings. With Mitch 'The King of POKER' at full back.

Wyvern kicked off and immediately won back possession, the Wellington pack a little slow to react round the ball. Grant took the ball and good rucking secured ball for the backs.

With barely 20 seconds on the clock the backs called a planned move, quick soft hands giving Billy a run through the middle he weaved and dodged his way through the first two tackles and gifted a lovely weighted pass to Mitch who had a straight run in under the posts.

Converting his own try. Wyvern 7 – 0 in the first minute.

Wellington were not going to be a push over and the game settled into a more even affair. Wellington managing to secure their own ball, using quick penalties and their larger players (Johnno) to batter the Wyvern defence.

However Wyvern's defence was strong if, a little high at times according to the ref.

Both teams were challenging well in the middle of the park and both conceding penalties in the tackle area.

Wyvern soon had possession at the scrum inside Wellingtons 22. The move was called and with Wyvern's pack being dominant in the drive, Flookie spun a neat ball blind to Perein who sprinted in and dived over in the corner for an easy score. Unconverted 12 – 0.

The next 25-30 minutes of the first half was a very scrappy and messy affair. The pitch now muddy and churning up gave both sides some interesting decisions to make. Wellington with more possession ran their lines but were never inventive enough to break the Wyvern defence.

When wyvern did have the ball it was never kept very long. Penalty after penalty was conceded, either offside in the ruck, in the back line playing people off the ball or going over the top.

Yes it did appear every decision was going against Wyvern but they had to be more disciplined. Fortunately I think the Ref left the cards in his pocket, playing it as a friendly.

It was very frantic at times, Wyvern were rushing their possession and looked like they were panicking. Credit to Wellington for getting into the game physically, making it a real contest and not a walk over.

Copper even asked the ref at the break down for some time to speak to his players, where he asked them to calm down. Reminding them to keep possession and be patient for their opportunities.

With Wellington wanting to run everything Wyvern were let off a closer game. The quick penalties from their young (17) scrum half Master Bath just about kept at bay. The battering ram runs of Johnno either stopped by a couple of backs or Copper in the pack.

Wyvern were lucky still to be 12 - 0 up at the break.

Half time saw a complete change in 2nd row. Cookie and the returning Scovell replaced Goddard and Porcas. Grant (on his birthday) was struggling so made way for Stanley at Hooker.

The second half started as the first ended. Wyvern struggling to find some composure on the ball and it was Wellington who had the possession and territory.

The game was as messy as the muddy conditions, at times I felt sorry for the 15-20 watching in the cold. Fortunately Wyvern were drilled enough and organised in defence to keep the opposition out but a stronger, full Wellington side would have scored points I'm sure.

Some strong runs from Richards kept Wyvern attacking but when given the ball at penalties (yes we were given some) Wyvern should have kicked deep for territory as requested by Copper and then organised themselves better at set plays.

Wellington were now competing better in all phases of play.

With Will Collier now burnt out at blind side, Ben Bryant came on for the final 20.

Coach Knell electing to put on a Wellington shirt and play for the opposition.

Wyvern did defend well. They had to really as they could not keep their own possession. The penalty count must have been nearing 20 against.

Unfortunately Wellington did get their rewards for fronting up and with an attacking scrum on 22, they won quick ball, young scrum half Bath scampered blind side, using his pace and the dummy run of his winger, skipped round the back row and crossed the line. Showing off, he dived like Tom Daley to score their deserved 5 points. Conversion missed so the gap was 7 points; 12 – 5.

Wyvern repeatedly failed to secure possession when attacking the Wellington line. Line outs not going to plan after the changes at lock and Hooker. Scrummaging remained good keeping pressure on Wellington in their own half.

The final 15 minutes saw Frodo off (old age) and Grant back on at Hooker "HAPPY BIRTHDAY" and Stanley going to 10.

It was Wellington who looked the most likely to score, Wyvern defending their own line from several attacking scrums.

But strong scrummaging and good defence in the back row from Richards, Copper and flookie kept them out. In the backs when the ball was actually released the threat was snuffed out well. Either doubling up on Johnno to halt his runs or getting up fast, creating mistakes from pressure.

On one occasion when Wellington did have the overlap the final pass was dropped, letting Wyvern off the hook.

The final whistle came as a relief for Players and supports alike. The drudgery was over and they could all go back to the club house and watch England thrash the Italians.....

Knickers and bra's were out in the bar afterwards and even some memberships were paid!

Next Saturday (18th) Wyvern are at home in the league looking for revenge v Chard!

Training Wednesdays; 6.45-8pm. Bring boots and trainers.