

Saturday 10th October 2009

Keighley 3rds 45 – 3 Aireborough 3rds

With most of the club either injured or defecting to watch a game of rugby league, Aireborough's choice of available players was somewhat limited. The remnants of the first and second teams had been training in the morning and the small minority of these who were willing to lower themselves to third team level helped out, namely Richard Helm, James Greenwood and club legend and former public schoolboy, Richard Peregrine Fall. Third team captain, Andrew Wood, passed on the captaincy duties to Simon Wilson who played with athleticism and panache at flanker along with Adrian Wedgewood and latterly, James Greenwood who started the game at scrum-half. Wilson was ably helped out in the decision making process on a regular basis by the legendary Fall who played at second row and then after 10 minutes at number eight following the early departure of Martyn Helmsley due to a suspected broken nose possibly caused by the opposition's jealousy of his sublime skills.

The first 20 minutes went Aireborough's way with some clinical recycling and forward dominance, with Aire progressing up the pitch and applying endless pressure to Keighley. The starting front five of Wilkinson, Gardner, David Greenwood, Windass and Fall were instrumental in this pressure. After this initial period, the departure of Helmsley and his subsequent replacement by Fall, who at the age of 41 had already been to training that morning, vastly reduced the mobility of the Aire back row and exposed the midfield to some strong running by Keighley's talented centres and this became a theme for the rest of the game with most, if not all, of Keighley's points beginning in this area. Despite this, some good defensive effort was put in by Peter Wilkins and Will Tomlinson in the centres and newcomer Luke Davis defended intelligently from the wing, with a very creditable performance on the other wing from Andy Watts.

Half time saw a couple of changes to the personnel but not even the introduction of Richard Helm and Richard Sweetman could stem the Keighley flow. Despite the endless encouragement from Fall, who had started to recite stories of triumph over adversity from matches played decades ago, possibly in a previous life, this theme continued through the rest of the game and Keighley ended the game as easy winners. Helm also tried to add his own blend of motivation, but no one understood what he was talking about. Aire can be proud of the commitment shown in this game especially in the forwards and set pieces where Aire always had the upper hand.