

Saturday, 12th December

Aireborough II XV 68 – 0 Baildon II XV

Heavy ground at Littlemore greeted both teams as another local derby between Aireborough and fierce rivals Baildon kicked off last Saturday. Baildon, struggling for numbers fielded a weakened 14 man side to face the 16 men of Aireborough and the Aire started to find the gaps within seconds of the start. Will Marlow opened the scoring within the first 5 minutes to begin what was to become a demolition of Baildon.

Fielding one of their strongest back lines of the season so far, with pace and power across the pitch, Aireborough soon stretched the advantage to 12-0 with still less than 10 minutes on the clock thanks to an audacious run round the outside of the defence by Scott Waterhouse. Both Waterhouse and Marlow had points to prove to the coaching staff as they fight for spots in the first team and created havoc throughout the first half. As minutes went by the scoreboard kept on ticking and it became clear that the game was going to be very one sided.

Baildons only highlight was the work of the scrum who caused problems for Aireborough's pack holding and driving back consistently. Aire's pack devoid of last weeks best players, Sharp and Godley, struggled to find the excellent form they have showed all season. Once out of the scrum however Aire's pack quickly had the ascendancy. The lineout was solid and reliable enough for the captain to rely on Williams to find Hanson at 2 even in the deepest of defensive positions.

Around the ruck area Baildon struggled to compete, leaving a man out to cover the missing 15th player would result in runs from the Exley dynasty, Wilson and on occasion some gaps were even big enough for a marauding charge from the Aire captain Bryson who's sacrifice of personal health in order to help boost packweight continues. As the first half continued the tries came quick and fast. Waterhouse scored a blistering hatrick showing pace to burn as Baildon slipped further from hope. Rodgers scored with a tremendous breakthrough down the centre of the field making up slightly for his recent indiscretions of playing in make up and being constantly late for meetings!

The end of the first half saw two notable tries, firstly one for Tom Holdsworth, who, after being unluckily disallowed a try last week, wasn't going to make the same mistake again this time. Tom's fast ball from the breakdown had created chance after chance for the backs and meant Baildon would creep out wide to try and cover. Holdsworth took great advantage of this and began to find gaps on the pick and go and also put some great chips over the top. One such gap was big enough for him to squeeze through and he slipped in second gear for a charge to the line, supported on both sides by the evidently faster than they look Tomlinson and Bryson.

Try of the match was to follow that, not the longest run of the day or indeed the fastest but doubtless the most impressive and a worthy winner of the coveted Ramzmattaz cravat. Receiving the ball midway inside the Baildon half Stu Williams, Aire's hooker / scrum half extraordinaire set off to the left wing before something strange happened. In what was later claimed as a 'sidestep' Williams abruptly stopped running to the left and then, after a seconds wait, began a run to right.. confusion reigned through the Baildon midfield and with site of the posts Williams hit the accelerator and crossed the line for a splendid score. Converting his own try in what was to be a memorable day in which he scored 22 of Aire's points.

The second half started much the same as the first with Rodgers showing his considerable strength once again to break through the tackle and jink his way to the tryline. After that score however Baildon fought back bravely and had a period of sustained pressure in the Aire half. The Aireborough defence, fearing the wrath of coach Wray stood their ground resolutely and pushed the rivals back before once again taking control of the game. Points continued to come in with

another speedy Marlow score and Aire could have scored 5 or 6 more tries but for some resolute Baildon defence.

Special note has to go to Andy Pickup who played fullback for the first time and had a superb game. Pickup's hefty boot and pace set up a couple of excellent counters that eventually lead to tries, this may not be the last time Andy is asked to fill in at 15. Mention must also go to Luke Exley who continues to impress more with each week and would have scored a couple of tries himself but instead offloaded for others to score in better positions, something some others could learn from! The final try of the day came from Alex Fox. Fox had come on at half time for Waterhouse and proved why selection is incredibly hard at the moment by scoring in the corner. Williams converted the score and with only 20 minutes played in the second half and Baildon beginning to squabble amongst themselves the ref called an end to proceedings preventing Aire from a possible ton after scoring 68 points in little over 55 minutes of rugby.

The result continues Aire's great recent form and is the 4th consecutive win. They take this record to Sheffield Tigers for what will doubtless be a tougher test in the merit table this Saturday.

Moortown 3rds 51-0 Aireborough 3rds

Aireborough returned to action without a full side, but were generously aided by Moortown, who levelled the sides up to make a 13-a-side match. Despite solid tackling from Denis Foley and Ian Waite-Pullan, there were always gaps in the defence which were well exploited by Moortown's strong running backs. There was the occasional strong spell of forward play from Aireborough but these were too few and far between to pose any real threat to the scoreline. Martin Gath played his first game of the season and was man of the match following a determined, aggressive display and several ground breaking runs and was aided in the back row by Chad Smith, who also put in a very creditable performance. The first half of the match wasn't too one sided but the floodgates opened towards the end of the second half when Aireborough lost Iain Craven to injury and Ian Waite-Pullan was sin-binned after a small altercation with his opposite number. The match then became slightly farcical with eleven Aire players on the pitch and too many distances to cover.