

SATURDAY, 4<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER

## **Aireborough RUFC 19 York Railway Institute 0**

There has been much concern at Nunroyd recently at the strength of the squad as a number of key players had either retired, were injured or were taking breaks from the club due to university. Coach Simon Carbutt was fielding a side with a few players playing in new positions but as the game went on it was apparent that the pre season training and drilling had formed a good foundation for some sparkling and adventurous rugby. York, who are newly promoted to the league, looked to have a good sized pack but were well matched with Richard Fall returning from his brief retirement to add some size and power to the scrums and loose play.

The early exchanges were fairly even but slowly Aire started to take control and some excellent tactical kicking by standoff Nick Holdsworth gave the home side well earned territorial advantage. Both sides had chances to score and a couple of penalties were missed by both sides. After 25 minutes Aire were camped on the York line pressing for a score. The ball broke from a scrum and when it was recycled at the ensuing ruck veteran prop Tim Baxter burst through some despairing tackles and crashed over taking 3 York players with him in the process (See photo), Chris Blackshaw converted. Aire continued in this vein but never quite managed to stretch their lead before the break.

Aire started the 2nd half well and the back row was causing York trouble with some excellent tackling, covering and close support for the backs in attack. Johnny Mackey at open side flanker was outstanding and put in a man of the match performance and was well supported by Baxter junior, Tom. Nick Holdsworth continued to control the game and rarely took the wrong option and his kicking was accurate and kept the opposition going backwards. When the ball was shipped wide the new centre pairing of Luke Rogers and Will Marlow looked dangerous and Anthony Clitheroe showed his pace and went close but injured himself in the process being replaced by another veteran James Kinghorn. The 2nd try came as the ball was slung out right and collected by winger Blackshaw who still had work to do but powered over in the corner. Aire were now in complete control and even when York pressed for a score somehow the home side cleared their lines, one such clearance saw Kinghorn pounce on a loose ball and burst free from inside his own 22. Kinghorn had a 10 yard start on the defence and looked certain to go the length of the field to score but slowly he was reeled in by the cover and brought down within a few yards of the line, maybe the sleepless nights with his newborn twins is taking its toll? Aire pinched the ball at the next line out and from the ruck prop Mike Tully spotted a gap in the defence and, in a similar way to Baxters earlier try, used his power to crash through tackles to score near the posts, Blackshaw added the extra points.

York were starting to get frustrated and the game started to get a little ugly with a fracas breaking out near the Aire line. It's not exactly clear who did what but James Greenwood appears to have been spotted committing some foul play and received his marching orders from the referee, he will now certainly miss the next 2 games with an automatic Aireborough imposed ban and may then have to appear before an RFU disciplinary committee. It was a sorry end to what had been an entertaining game played in good spirit by both sides.

## **Roundhegians 61 -5 Aireborough 2<sup>nd</sup> XV**

Fine weather greeted the start of the merit league season for Aireborough's second team. Some squad changes from last seasons successful campaign brought in some new faces to the Aire lineup and the lack of time spent training as a unit soon showed. From the kick off Hegians organisation, fitness and well drilled attacks hit hard into the Aire defence. An early try in the corner was an ominous sign of what proved to be a long day for Aire at the home of last years Yorkshire 3 & Airewharfe Cup champions. The contest in the forwards was hard fought all afternoon with Aire's pack, bolstered by the inclusion Simon Sharp & Chris Tate competing well in

the scrums and at the breakdown with Martin Booth proving as vociferous as ever in the ruck.

The real dominance from Roundhegians came once the ball was with the backs as a mixture of experience and youth regularly punched through the Aire line. Poor covering and over commitment to the ruck from the Aire pack meant Hegians centres were regularly able punch through the line as the backs became outnumbered, setting up a continuous supply of chances to converted out wide. As the game stretched into the second half Aire's lack of fitness and continuity was continually tested, the line-out, a strength last year, proving unreliable meaning rare forays into the opposition half proved fruitless.

The final 20 minutes however showed some reinvigorated play from Aireborough and some of the spirit from last season. Iain Craven provided some quick ball and good kicking options going forward and Phil Sharp ran himself into the ground covering the attacks in defence. Near the death Aireborough finally had something to cheer for a hard days toil with a charging run through the line getting Martin 'The Wasp' Gath onto the scoresheet only moments after having a similar effort, this time attempting to tunnel over the line, being harshly penalised for a double movement! With one of the hardest games of the season out of the way, the cobwebs cleared out, the Wasp on the scoresheet and a great night had by all in Saturday evenings 'Bad taste shirt night' Aire go into next weeks Selby game with the bit between their teeth to get some points on the merit league board.

### **Skipton 3rds 27 -20 Aireborough 3rds**

With the help of veterans Richard Sweetman and Andrew Wood who both reneged on promises of retirement to their wives and debutants for the club Adam Born, Mark Nommik, Kenny Parsons and man of the match Jack Whittle, Aireborough 3rd team took a full side to the first game of the season away at Skipton.

The fact that Aireborough raised a full third team is a testament to the commitment of the whole club and it was rewarded with a tremendous performance which saw the team narrowly lose away to a strong Skipton side in a highly enjoyable and entertaining match.

The first half saw both sides score three tries. Aireborough opened the scoring following a break away try by centre Jack Whittle which was converted by fly half Kenny Parsons. For the second and third Aireborough tries Jack Whittle turned provider off-loading first for hooker Elliott Hails to score and then for full back Ben Reynolds. Kenny Parsons added a penalty and at half time Aireborough led 20-15 after Skipton had missed all their conversion attempts.

The second half saw Skipton dominate possession and despite a big effort in defence and a number of promising attacks by Aireborough, Skipton scored two further tries whilst Aireborough did not add to their points tally.

Although Aireborough narrowly lost they showed plenty of promise for the season to come, and with the addition of a few more players this could be a very successful season for the third team.