

Beaconsfield RFC: 1st XV match report
Saturday 15th September, 3 pm k/o, Oak Lodge Meadow, Beaconsfield

Beaconsfield 10 Buckingham RFC 13

BRFC suffered a narrow defeat at home to Buckingham as a lackluster first half showing proved their undoing. With the visitors holding on at the end in the face of strong pressure from the home team, Buckingham took the two points with a victory margin of 13-10, having closed out the first half with a 13-3 lead.

Despite 7 changes to last week's victorious starting line-up due to both injuries and unavailability, BRFC started brightly and looked to try & impose the same degree of control on the game that had marked their performance the previous week. Early pressure forced a 7th minute offside infringement from the Buckingham three quarter line and Barton slotted home the kick from 20 metres directly in front of the posts to give Becs the sought-after early lead. 3-0 However, the home team failed to capitalize on this early advantage & the Buckingham team moved forward to pressure the Becs' 22 through a combination of strong forward driving, clinical rucking and the strong prompting of their wirey young stand-off who kicked well from hand all afternoon.

Becs were further hampered through injuries in the early part of the first half with the departure of wing Rankin after 9 minutes (broken/dislocated finger) to be replaced by Cadwalader, closely followed by the exit of fly-half Tappin (shoulder problem) whose replacement by utility forward Benham necessitated a number of positional changes which did not help the home team's organisation and rhythm. Benham came on to the flank, Lambert moved out to the left wing and young replacement Cadwalader was repositioned at fly-half.

Having seen the early penalty count very much in their favour, Becs then saw the pendulum swing the other way conceding a series of penalties for either holding on in the tackle when in possession, or hands in the ruck when competing in defence. At this stage of the game the visitors' ability to slow down Becs' possession, a facet of their game where their number 7 particularly excelled, allied to greater effectiveness and ruthlessness at the ruck when in possession, meant that Becs played a large share of the middle period of the first half on the back foot. Buckingham kicked a penalty in the twelfth minute to level the scores at 3-3 and then took the lead in the 19th minute with a try from their outside centre. Having conceded a penalty which Buckingham kicked to touch, Becs stood off in defence as quick ball off the top was spun to the opposition 13 who strolled untouched through the gap to touch down almost under the posts. With a successful conversion, Buckingham now led 10-3.

The remainder of the first half was played out in much the same vain until the last 5 minutes of the period when the crowd began to see glimpses of the aggressive forward play that had characterised the Becs display of the previous week. This allowed the reorganized back division a little more time and space and saw the team start to play

together more effectively, and permitted Cadwalader to demonstrate his silky running skills and eye for the gap. Despite this uptick in intensity, Becs were unable to turn their improved form into points and the final score of the half went to Buckingham who kicked a penalty 20 metres out in front of the posts following an offside indiscretion by the home side's three quarters. HALF TIME 3 -13

The early part of the second half was hard fought in the middle of the pitch with the Becs forwards now more than matching their Buckingham counterparts in terms of intensity and aggression at the contact point. If Becs were guilty of anything at this stage it was a tendency to deliver slow ball due to poor body positioning in the contact area, or an inclination to try and force things a little too much in the knowledge that they had some catching up to do. As a result, ball was either slow or scrappy and the home team were unable to establish any phase play given the number of turnovers or unforced errors. Buckingham missed an opportunity to stretch their lead in the 48th minute with a penalty kick pushed wide of the posts, at which point the home side hit their straps and began to establish firm control of both possession and territory. Prompted by strong ball carrying by the ever tenacious Kavanagh, ably supported by Howells and Benham, half backs Barton and Cadwalader started to better direct their kicks into the corners and the lineout, marshaled excellently in the second half by Patterson and Jackson began to win its won ball and challenge the opposition ball. In the second period, Becs won 100% of its own throw and stole 3 of the opposition's 7 throws.

The break-through score came in the 62nd minute when a decent forward drive following secure middle ball at the lineout from Patterson, was followed by 2 solid rucks that moved the attack into the heart of the opposition 22. Ball moved out quickly to centrefield by the halves saw Tucker take an excellent line back through the opposition backline defence and with the strength to match his eye for the gap he powered his way over for the try to the left of the posts. Barton converted to bring the scores to 10-13 – GAME ON.

The last 25 minutes (yes, the second half was 87 minutes long!) saw the home team create numerous opportunities to secure the much sought-after victory. However, a combination of resolute Buckingham defence, poor decision making around the final pass or kick, accompanied by a small lack of confidence to take on the final responsibility all meant that Becs were unable to pull off the win. A Tucker break through the middle saw the ageing centre cut back inside to look for support rather than back his pace to try & make the corner; a momentary hesitation by Bondoc when shown the outside saw the speedy wingman ultimately bundled into touch 5 yards short of the line after the midfield backs had created the space out wide from quick turnover ball; a weaving run by Cadwalader saw him beat several players down the left but once into the 22 & bereft of support, his cross-field kick deep into the right hand corner was eagerly fielded by an unchallenged Buckingham full back who cleared easily into touch; these were just 3 of the clear-cut opportunities created but ultimately spurned. Even the introduction of veteran slim-fast flanker Broken-Ribs at inside centre could not help that final push over the line needed to secure victory. A

final chance for parity was missed as Barton was unable to convert a difficult penalty kick attempt from 40 metres in the 87th minute and the visitors left with spoils. So really a tale of an opportunity missed. Buckingham who competed very well in all aspects of the game, probably deserved their victory but the home team dressing room would have been disappointed that they failed to show up in the first 40 minutes. A better performance in the second half although clearly decision-making still needs some work, and more players need to start stepping forward rather than leaving the same few to battle for all the hard yards. Former skipper Kavanagh continues to set the example that others must surely try and start to attain and was awarded the home team man of the match. Plenty of work to do in training.

BRFC team line-up:

1	Ed Middleton	9	Jez Barton
2	Wayne Jackson	10	Nick Tappin
3	Kwong Lin	11	John Bondoc
4	Donald Patterson	12	Dan Wilson
5	Callum Wilkinson	13	Glenn Tucker
6	Ian Howells	14	Josh Rankin
7	Neil Lambert	15	Dave Lewis
8	Ken Kavanagh		

Replacements:

John Benham (replace Tappin - 22 mins)

Ashley Cadwalader (replace Rankin - 9 mins)

David Breckenridge (replace Lambert – 82 mins)