

Match Report - Sunday, 21st March 2010

London Irish (Lions) v Reeds – under 15

The London Irish Lions (under 15s) were preparing for their seventh league match of the season in the Surrey League Division One following six victories in their first six league matches. They now faced a home match against Reeds. It was a dull morning at Sunbury with a slight chill in the air, though the sun did come out later in the morning. The pitch was on the soft side and the match was scheduled for an 11.00am kick off.

Reeds kicked off and in the opening few minutes play centred around the halfway line. Following a period of tough tackling by both sides London Irish broke clear and started to apply heavy pressure inside the Reeds' '22'. Reeds defended tenaciously as the pressure grew and play moved close to the Reeds' try line. London Irish won a scrum and the ball was passed across the pitch to **James Stanhope** on the right side. James then ran past the last Reeds' defenders and over the try line near the corner before running round towards the posts to open the scoring. The try was not converted.

London Irish 5 – 0 Reeds

It had already become a very fast game and London Irish were again applying pressure to the Reeds' defence. London Irish had chances to score but the ball did not reach the overlapping backs and opportunities were lost. Reeds continued to defend well as London Irish threatened to score again. Reeds then collected the ball in their own '22' and a Reeds' player ran virtually the whole length of the pitch down the left wing to score before he finished it off by running round under the posts. Despite some missed tackles this was a great individual try albeit against the run of play. The try was converted.

London Irish 5 – 7 Reeds

Shortly after the restart Reeds kicked the ball up-field. Following an awkward bounce a Reeds' player, who was following up, collected the ball and after evading a tackle ran through to score an opportunistic try under the posts. The try was converted.

London Irish 5 – 14 Reeds

Reeds were now in a strong position though the score did not, in any way, accurately reflect the game as London Irish again went back on to the attack. Reeds continued to defend well and play was now based in the Reeds half. As play moved into the Reeds' '22' London Irish began to seriously threaten the Reeds' line. The London Irish forwards were proving too strong for their Reeds' counterparts and were dominating them. However the ball was not always reaching the London Irish backs and, when it did, handling errors were beginning to creep in. However, the London Irish pressure was such that a try was inevitable and shortly afterwards **Jordan Harris** collected the ball on the right side and using his strength and speed drove over to score. This was a crucial try for London Irish following the previous two tries conceded. The try was not converted.

London Irish 10 – 14 Reeds

From the restart play moved straight back into the Reeds' half. Following another excellent scrum by London Irish the ball was passed to **Robert Lynch** about fifty yards out. With what can only be described as an absolutely brilliant piece of skill, Robert split the Reeds' defence with a dummy and side-step and then ran down the centre of the pitch through the Reeds' defence to score under the posts. **Robert** then converted the try.

London Irish 17 – 14 Reeds

From the restart London Irish went back on the attack and continued to apply heavy pressure. Almost immediately a brilliant short kick over the Reeds' defence completely wrong-footed the Reeds' defenders and left two London Irish backs chasing the ball outrunning a sole Reeds' defender. **Aaron Maddix** caught the bouncing ball and touched it down to score in the left corner. **Robert Lynch** converted the try with a great kick from a very difficult angle on the touchline.

The half-time whistle blew immediately.

Half Time: London Irish 24 – 14 Reeds

London Irish immediately returned to the attack applying yet more pressure to the Reeds' defence. Reeds continued to defend tenaciously but, after a few minutes, a driving maul by the strong London Irish forwards drove the Reeds' defence backwards and over their line for **Adam Szczotka** to touch down and score on the left side. The try was not converted.

London Irish 29 – 14 Reeds

Play resumed around the halfway line with some hard tackling. The London Irish forwards continued to dominate their counterparts but the Reeds' defenders were fighting hard. Play moved between the halfway line and the Reeds' '22' with Reeds attempting to counter-attack but Reeds were having great difficulty getting out of their own half. London Irish continued on the attack and were now frequently threatening the Reeds' try line. After yet another scrum was won by London Irish, **Alex Abbot-Tavener** received the ball and powerfully drove through the last Reeds' defenders to score. **Robert Lynch** converted the try.

London Irish 36 – 14 Reeds

It continued to be a very hard game. London Irish forwards continued to dominate but the backs were not able to put together their usual passing moves. Some credit for this must be given to the Reeds' defence as they continued to tackle strongly. Reeds then moved forward in a rare attack around the London Irish '22' and were awarded a penalty. The ball was quickly passed out wide for a Reeds' player to run over and score a good try. The try was not converted.

London Irish 36 – 19 Reeds

Play then moved back and forward as Reeds continued to fight for every ball. However, London Irish remained in control and returned to the attack following more very good work by the forwards. Following a very good passing move by the backs, **Robert Lynch** received the ball and ran through to score in the corner. The try was not converted.

London Irish 41 – 19 Reeds

There were now only a few minutes left but Reeds refused to concede defeat and went on the attack. A Reeds' player collected the ball in a wide position inside the London Irish '22' and ran through to score in the corner. The try was not converted.

London Irish 41 – 24 Reeds

In the final moments of the match London Irish went back on the attack as Reeds tackled well and attempted to set up a counter-attack. The game ended where most of the match had been played – with London Irish on the attack well inside the Reeds half.

Full Time: London Irish 41 – 24 Reeds

This was a very tough match and another great win for the London Irish (under 15) Lions who also collected another bonus point for the number of tries scored. The team has now won all of their first seven league matches and remain on top of the Surrey League Division One.

At the end of the match the coaches congratulated the team on winning a very tough match while not playing as well as they could. The excellent discipline of the forwards was praised. The coaches outlined areas where the team could improve. Having said that the result was seldom in doubt apart from one short period in the first half and most of the game was played in the Reeds' half. There were some great individual performances by both backs and forwards and the commitment of the players was exceptional.

Credit must also be given to the Reeds team who played with real tenacity throughout and never gave up. They were rewarded with a bonus point for scoring four tries. They also had some very good individual performances and were very well organised, particularly in defence. When they attacked they looked dangerous and they will be a tough match for any team.