



In Touch

At times it was as if neither side wanted to win though both had much to play for. In the end it was Ludlow who scraped a narrow three-point victory at Edgely Park, Whitchurch. Ludlow got off to a bad start. They were 3-0 down to a penalty and had lost prop, Harry Moran, to a high challenge in the opening minutes. In fairness it was a very unfortunate, and certainly not malicious incident, one man's head hitting the other's chin, but the result meant Whitchurch were a man down for the match and Ludlow a prop down for probably three weeks.

After resisting a period of heavy Whitchurch pressure Ludlow got things back on track with a lovely backs move which resulted in a try for Tom Perkins followed by a brilliant pick up from his feet by Jack Davies which also resulted in a try. Neither try was converted so Ludlow turned round 3-10 up and looking back in control. That all changed as we kicked off the second half. Back row, Raife Hughes, who had been having a good game, followed the kick a little too enthusiastically and failed to pull out of a full-blooded tackle on the catcher. He couldn't quibble when he was shown a straight red and Ludlow were a man down.

But it got worse as Ludlow's replacement prop Gwyn Pierce, got a yellow trying to stop a Whitchurch ruck and the ref had no hesitation in awarding a penalty try. Whitchurch were energised by the swing of momentum and scored again almost from the kick off and looked well in charge at 17-10. Cue Whitchurch's turn to try and throw the match away. Their back row got a yellow card for disputing a ref decision and that became red having earned a yellow earlier in the game. Gwyn Pierce returned to the fray, and renewed by his rest really put himself about. The Ludlow scrum got thoroughly on top of their opposition and Gwyn, Charlie Doyle and Josh Jukes, made some big advances. Ludlow scored a cracker of a try through AJ Roche on the wing, but the ref ruled it forward.



*Whitchurch v Ludlow
Photos courtesy of Trevor Patchett*



Tom Perks found his kicking range and slotted a penalty and then Jack Small found the line, converted by Tom. The final score 20-3, an entertaining though frustrating game for both sides which either side might have won. Gwyn Pierce got the Ludlow Brewery man of the match award and thoroughly deserved it.

So Ludlow move to fifth in the table and we travel next to Moseley Oak on Nov 30 for a double header involving our second team. Once again, our seconds had the misfortune to have their fixture cancelled as this time Luctonians failed to muster a team.

Whitchurch proved excellent hosts and had laid on an excellent meal for us. Embarrassingly the message did not seem to have got through to our committee members, so I enjoyed the excellent company of injured second row Arthur Nias at the table. He feels very strongly that the seconds would have more luck in finding games and attract more players if we abandoned the league system and simply tried to arrange fixtures with local clubs like Clee Hill, Bishop's Castle etc. His view was reflected by the Whitchurch committee who are having real problems holding on to players. Their second team, playing that day, featured a former first team hooker, now aged 62, and playing on the wing. He did it, without his family's knowledge, simply to ensure that the other lads in the team actually got a game. Hats off to him. It reminds me of my late father-in-law who boxed under an assumed name so his family wouldn't realise he was still taking part in bouts. Quite what they thought when he came home regularly with a split lip and a black eye he never related.

Whitchurch's player exodus, mainly to club's north off the Shropshire border, has been mainly solved by attracting former Welsh international back row, Andy Powell, as their coach. His coaching ability has brought players back rather than prowess at navigating a golf cart!

So, we've got two weeks off and time for some more of our injured players to recuperate. Arthur, who you will remember had to be stitched up after falling from a horse, tells me that he is targeting being fit for the Moseley game and so is Jack Lines. Just as well because Raife is likely to be out courtesy of his red card and prop, Harry too courtesy of his head injury.

See you soon.

Andy Wright

President Ludlow Rugby Club

