

Different Location Same Result

Due to a variety of reasons, not least the ridiculous sloping comedy pitch, it was decided to move the home ground of AGC Rugby from Worthy Down to the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst this season.



And so, at ten o'clock on a damp, cold and windy morning the squad assembled for their first training session of the season with our new club coach SSgt Andy Jackson AGC(SPS) who had recently returned from a successful tour with the Army Veterans in Australia.

The old days of turning up just minutes before kick off and expecting to start are now long gone and so the morning training session was an ideal opportunity to blow away the cobwebs of travelling and run through the game plan; a simple plan! Tie the opposition up in the tight and then release the backs!

The opposition for the day was to be the APTC. For many seasons we had seen them run round the pitch like the proverbial headless chickens and on occasions they had run us close. Watching their morning training it looked like they meant business and that the match was going to follow previous years' pattern; a physical battle with lots of 'argy bargy'.

Unfortunately, 10 mins before the start the APTC Secretary informed us that they did not have a suitably qualified front row. They would forfeit the match and play unopposed at the scrummage; this was a real blow and the AGC pack knew that their dominance had just been taken away and that the afternoon would be spent chasing down the lighter opposition. Then came another first for merit table 2, the teams entered the field and a female referee called both skippers to the centre, checked the teams studs and then we were ready for the off.

The whistle sounded and Pte Charl Coetzer AGC(SPS), who has just returned from Combined Services duty, launched the ball high into the air and the pack stormed into the APTC with reckless abandonment; the back row of Pte Jack Berry AGC(SPS), Lt Jim Douglas AGC(SPS) (Skipper for the day) and Cpl Dickie Homer AGC Band started as they finished, the first to every break down. Despite a lack of opportunity to impose themselves in the scrummage the AGC tight five put in some early hard yards that ensured that the APTC knew about it.

and created a defensive wall that was testing the strength and fitness of the APTC to their limit.

Dominating at every lineout Cpl Sam Lovegrove AGC(RMP) and debutant Capt Warren Davies AGC(ALS) ensured complete control of the only contested set pieces and it was not long before the forward dominance resulted in typical forward try with Warren Davies crashing over the line from close quarters; despite the hurricane like conditions Charl Coetzer secured the conversion – AGC 7 – APTC 0.

Having soften up opposition it was time to unleash the ever dangerous backs and despite very little time playing together the link between 9 (SSgt Kev Hughes AGC(MPS)) and 10 (Charl Coetzer) was working a treat and the ball zipped along the line through centres Cpl Ryan Ellis AGC(RMP) and Cpl Knoxy Bainivalu AGC(SPS) at which stage we were spoilt for choice as the back three of Cpl Rob Kopicki AGC(SPS), Pte Eugene Engelbrecht AGC(SPS) and Maj Chris Adair AGC(ALS) had speed to burn.

WO1 'Griff' Griffiths AGC(SPS) was dashing around the field like a young buck belying his veteran status and his front row comrades of WO2 Tim Byrne AGC(RMP) and LCpl 'Ski' Kovoisamanunu AGC(SPS) were never far from his side



Despite much hard tackling and resolve from the APTC it was only going to be a matter of time before the possession and territory was converted into points and after a move that involved the majority of the team, forwards and backs, Charl Coetzer cut the defensive line with his trademark straight running and scored the first of his tries. Unable to convert the score remained AGC 12 – APTC 0.

Now confident that the APTC were there for the taking the ball was being thrown about by all; unfortunately the weather and skill levels did not always meet expectation and the number of school boy errors had the Coach Andy Jackson and the Chairman Lt Col Dave O'hara AGC(SPS) rather annoyed. Fortunately for their blood pressure it was not long until normal business was resumed and Charl Coetzer crossed the line for his second score of the afternoon. Another missed conversion left the half time score AGC 17 – APTC 0.

The half time 'chat' was more like an industrial hairdryer as it was clear that more was required both in terms of execution and points on the board; technically the APTC had nothing left, but they remained physically ready and had not yet been completely pacified.

Some fresh blood was introduced in the form of Maj Tom Wood AGC(ETS), LCpl 'B' Biutanaseva AGC(SPS) and LCpl Dave Daveta AGC(SPS) for the start of the second half and this, and the half time chat, soon energised the team into a more cohesive performance.

As if to prove the coach's tactical prowess the first try of the second half was scored by replacement LCpl Dave Daveta AGC(SPS) following a flowing move involving backs and forwards AGC 22 – APTC 0.



Not wanting to be left out, the pack trundled towards the line and bullied their way over the line with Maj Tom Wood AGC(ETS) sprinting the last 5 (or was it 25) yards to the try line; he then modestly trotted back to the half way line shouting at his team mates for more effort and then stopped hands on knees, out of breath, calling for the water to be brought onto the pitch AGC 27 – APTC 0 ,

More slick work from the backs saw a fantastic team move finished at speed by Rob Kopicki who showed the APTC a clean pair of heels scoring in the corner AGC 32 – APTC 0

As the dark skies closed in the APTC realised that their day was done and that the final few minutes would be an exercise in damage limitation; they decided that their best defence was to kick the ball out of their half at every opportunity (they must have been watching England's recent performances as tactically it had the same ill effect). This simply gave the AGC more life and time and time the hard run backs made more and more yards, but slack contact drills meant the APTC kept regaining the ball. In the final dying seconds of the game a clearance kick was majestically taken on the AGC 22 by Prop Ski Kovoisanunu who despite being surrounded by APTC players started his enormous engine and set off towards the APTC try line. The spectators of Col Ward (Regt Col), Lt Col Andy Deans AGC(ETS) and Secretary Maj Daz Carrick AGC(SPS) watched with absolute disbelief as he outpaced the backs of the APTC and ran 70 yards to score and unbelievable solo effort try. The game finished AGC 37 – APTC 0.



All in all a good day in the progress of the team this season; many thanks go to the new coach Andy Jackson and the Team Manager Griff Griffiths without whom the day would not have happened. Next match is AAC at RMAS on 9 Dec 09.