



# Tarleton Rugby Union Football Club

## Round Up – Season 09/10

A Round Up of Season 09/10, including all the match reports provided and posted on the Tarleton RUFC website, can be found in this report:

	Page
First XV .....	2
Second XV (The Nomads).....	20
Under 19s (Senior Colts).....	20
Under 17s (Junior Colts).....	20
Under 16s .....	21
Under 15s .....	24
Under 14s .....	35
Under 13s .....	38
Under 12s .....	39
Under 11s .....	50
Under 10s.....	50
Under 9s .....	53
Under 8s .....	53
Under 7s .....	53

Please note that in line with the RFU guidelines, Junior and Mini matches with a score difference of over 30 points are marked with an asterix \*



# Tarleton Rugby Union Football Club

## First XV

**24 April 2010**  
**Bury 38 Tarleton 7**

On the back of their recent run of form and victories Tarleton should have arrived here brimming with confidence but to be truthful this was the worst performance that they have exhibited this season. There was no doubt that Bury (who are fighting for survival) were up for this game and started in a much more positive frame of mind.

Despite the Second Team having completed their season with a good victory on Wednesday the Firsts struggled their way to a squad of 16 for this game, which was disappointing to say the least. The extended season has not helped as we have lost a number of players to the cricket season but that does not excuse this performance. On paper it was a strong side and from the off Tarleton appeared to want to work their way through the A-Z of 'Mistakes that can be made during a rugby match' – dropped passes, dropped high balls, over-running passes, passing to no-one etc. became the order of the day and despite Lee Ward scoring in the corner following 1 good period of play the game was probably already lost.

The defensive skills that have been on display all season seemed to disappear and Bury broke tackle after tackle and for the first time this season Tarleton's heads went down.

Bury took their chances well and played some good rugby and if they survive (if Garstang win on Saturday Bury will go down with Windermere and Old Bedians) we would be targeting them for 4 points next season but only if we play on the day!

With next week's match being unnecessary it will be cancelled and the playing season will come to an end. Overall, we have had a reasonably good season playing in a higher division and we need to look to build on this next year, we have a good bunch of players and we will need to start training earlier to ensure that we can take part in the pre-season first round match of the cup and hit the ground running when we play our first game in next season's league campaign.

**17 April 2010**  
**Tarleton 44 Old Bedians 5**

Another emphatic win for the 1sts - Tarleton faced the relegation threatened Old Bedians this week. Tarleton on the back of a three game winning streak were bustling with confidence and eager to match the previous week's intensity.

The best laid plans never survive first contact however, or in this case the kick off. Poor communication from the forwards led to the ball bouncing loose and provided a golden opportunity for Old Bedians to attack the Tarleton's 22. A tough season of tackling practice was put to good use though as Tarleton weathered the storm and eventually pushed out of their own half and into attack.

Strong running from the forwards pressured the Old Bedians defence leading to a defensive scrum 5m from the line. This was marched backwards by Tarleton's impressive tight forwards allowing scrum half Jonny Mahon to poach possession and dive over for the first score. A rock hard pitch provided an ideal surface for Tarleton's quick backline and following a succession of line breaks by the centres Lee Ward was able to dummy his way over in the corner.

A hot headed bout of handbags then saw Tarleton down to 13 as Ben Traynor and Chris Ball were invited to take a 10 minute rest for retaliation and dissent respectively.

Tarleton looked to have survived the pressure of being a man down with a score for Old Bedians in the corner ruled out for a forward pass. Tarleton then lost possession in the resulting scrum and Old Bedians crashed over underneath the posts for a converted try. Tarleton then responded with



# Tarleton Rugby Union Football Club

style following a well worked line out in the oppositions 22 allowing Naishy to go rampaging down the 10 channel. Quick ball from the resulting ruck allowed Matthew Forrest to step his man and score under the posts.

Tarleton now up to a full complement of 15 maintained a similar intensity in the second half and converted them into points via tries from captain Chris Gordon, Jonny Mahon and Tom Eckersley.

The final try of the day was a great team effort with Dave Gordon taking the kick off at full tilt and storming up the blindside, as he was brought to ground he offloaded to his brother Chris who drew the last man and sent James Macefield in under the posts.

This game as with last week shows how far this team have developed this season and now go into the final fixtures full of confidence and expectation.

## **10 April 2010 Tarleton 60 Ashton under Lyne 5**

After the last two victories Tarleton started this game full of confidence. They had lost the opening match of the season against Ashton by 17-10 and knew that they had been ring rusty and unfit. How had they progressed over the intervening period? The answer was evident after the first 5 minutes of play when Archie Skoffic made a clean break and with some good inter-passing play gifted Andrew Bushell a try in the corner.

This opened the flood gates for Tarleton and their play was probably the best of the season as the forwards kept winning good ball in the set piece and open play and the backs made lots of ground with the possession they had.

After 11 mins. the pack put together 5 or 6 phases of driving pods and Tom Eckersley broke away drawing the last defender before popping the ball to Chris Ball who took his chance well, Bush added the conversion to make the score 12-0.

The next try came courtesy of a stunning break by Ian Simcox who ran for 35 meters (his hair blowing in the wind and wiping the dead flies from his eyes) tearing the Ashton defence apart; he passed the ball to Will Parker who had managed to keep up with him and Will passed the ball wide to Lee Ward on the wing to crash over for another try.

With 15 minutes gone the score was 17-0 and at this point over the last two weeks Tarleton usually switched off and it looked as though the same was going to happen again when Ashton were awarded a penalty for handling on the floor. They kicked for the corner and from the line-out went over for a try from a rolling maul.

From the re-start the Tarleton pack bundled the Ashton tackler into touch and from the line-out Archie Skoffic was given the ball and running a good line broke through the Ashton defence to score a try that was converted by Bush.

After 30 minutes Jonathon Mahon broke away from a ruck and chipped it through only to be held back just short of the line- we all thought a penalty try was in order but the ref. gave a penalty instead. Chris Gordon asked for the scrum and from this Tarleton moved the ball wide for Will Fell to score in the opposite corner. The try was converted by Bush and the score now stood at 31-5. Another chance went begging just before the break when Chris Ball was adjudged to have passed forward and a certain try was missed.

Nick Eckersley's half time talk was all about maintaining the impetus for the next 40 minutes and continuing to play rugby at the same pace and intensity. The first 10 minutes of the second half saw the Tarleton forwards applying good pressure only to be held short of the Ashton line and a turnover ball allowed Ashton to clear their lines.

Tarletons' next try was a bit of a solo effort from Will Fell who cleverly kicked through ensuring that



# Tarleton Rugby Union Football Club

the ball would bounce back into his hands and ran in a great individual try.

From the Ashton Kick the ball was gathered by Tarleton and some good inter-play between Olly Sly and Chris Ball saw Tarleton enter the Ashton 22 and a ball passed to Chris Gordon was flipped out to Tom Eckersley who ran in a good try which was converted by Bush.

The next Tarleton attack was cleared by Ashton with a kick up field, unfortunately for Ashton the ball was gathered by Phil Champion who burst through Ashtons' tacklers to score another good individual try which was converted by Olly Sly to make the score 50-5.

With 15 minutes left Archie Skoffic ripped the ball off an Ashton forward in the tackle and proceeded to run in a 40 metre try (he'll say it was further). The last try came courtesy of the forwards with Dave Gordon linking with Chris Gordon who popped a ball to Jon Tyrer who flipped the ball to Phil Champion who went in for his second try of the afternoon to finish the match at 60-5.

This was a performance to savour by Tarleton one that the coaches have known was there but have waited too long to see it and probably means that they are safe but to be mathematically sure they have to beat Old Bedians at home next Saturday.

## **27 March 2010** **Birchfield 10 Tarleton 13**

Following last week's victory Tarleton approached this game with a bit more confidence and from the start, as in last week's match, the forwards started at a frantic pace and were out rucking, out jumping and out scrumming the Birchfield pack. This led to a number of early penalties as Birchfield tried to stem the tide illegally and were pinged by the ref. Andrew Bushell slotted one penalty after 5 minutes and another after 8 minutes a 3rd was kicked into the corner for a line out after 12 minutes (Birchfield had a man sin-binned from this penalty for constant killing of the ball).

The line-out was won and the attempted crash over try was held up. The resulting scrum was turned 90 degrees and Tarleton lost possession. However, the pack was on fire and on Birchfields put in they shoved them back 3 metres off the ball and Tom Eckersley picked up at the base of the scrum and dived over for a converted try.

15 minutes gone and 13-0 up, a great start. Unfortunately, despite some more pressure and a missed penalty chance Tarleton could not add to this tally before half time and the game started to become a scrappy affair with lots of mistakes by both sides being made.

The second half continued in the same vein and Tarleton were penalised for being offside just inside their own half and the Birchfield kicker took the 3 points easily. For the rest of the half Tarleton were back in their defensive routine, Birchfield using the wind to keep the ball in Tarletons' half were foiled on a number of occasions by great lineout jumping by Dan Hackett who stole the ball on at least 3 occasions.

A good break by Birchfield saw their winger diving in at the corner only to be smashed into the corner flag and touch by a last ditch tackle by Ben Traynor.

Lee Waddell was sin binned for some reason that was hard to define and Birchfield started to use the extra man and the width of the pitch to good effect. They eventually crashed over the line in the corner and this converted try put the score at 13-10 with ten minutes still on the clock.

Tarleton upped their game and again despite some good pressure they were unable to convert this into more points, they defended well and did not get sucked in to the game plan that Birchfield then exhibited. Tempers became frayed but most of Tarleton's players concentrated on defence and when the ref called last play Tarleton took the line out and put the ball out for the win.

For the second week in succession it had been a game of two halves and somehow we have to find a way of maintaining the impetus created in the first half through the full 80 minutes.



# Tarleton Rugby Union Football Club

This was another good victory and with Windermere and Old Bedians both losing we now have some light between us and the relegation places. With 4 games left we should be targeting 2 or 3 of them for victories at least. Looking at the fixtures I think that 1 more victory should be enough to ensure Division 1 rugby next season.

Our next game is Ashton under Lyne at home in a fortnight and this is also a match that we can win if we play at the top of our game.

## **20 March 2010 Tarleton 25 Hawcoat Park 17**

This match started late as Hawcoat Parks coach was delayed and so Tarleton started fully warmed up against Parks' 10 minutes allowed. The first 5 minutes of the game was patchy as each side jockeyed for position.

Tarleton then took control of the game and started to play some expansive forwards rugby and this resulted in another Chris Naish 10metre dash to score the opening points which was converted by Chris Ball. 10 minutes gone 7-0 up and it got better!

Another good passage of play saw Tarleton with a penalty that was pulled left of the post. After 25 minutes another period of phased rugby saw Tarleton encamped on the Park line and led to a crash over try for Chris Ball.

12-0 up and the confidence in Tarleton was obvious for all to see – from another good forwards move Chris Gordon took the ball in and organised a push over try that involved the full pack and saw Naishy get the glory as he put the ball down over Park's line for a 17-0 lead with 28 minutes of the game gone.

Park then upped their game and started to make inroads into the Tarleton half however, an intercepted pass by Dan Hackett and linking with Chris Gordon saw the threat lifted as they made it over the half way line before the support disappeared! A kick through by Chris Ball resulted in a penalty as he was held back and he took the 3 points gratefully to give Tarleton a 20-0 half time lead.

Tarleton came out in the second half and were immediately put on the back foot by a much more aggressive display by Hawcoat Park with their forwards putting in some hard work and driving the ball on without the same high level of mistakes that they had exhibited in the first half.

Our scrum stopped working as our forwards tired and a lost scrum resulted in the Park No. 8 scoring a try with 5 minutes of the 2nd half gone. 7 minutes later they were given a penalty for being offside at the ruck and Park took a kick into the corner and from the line-out scored a converted try from a rolling maul.

20 – 12 and nerves started to show as Tarleton were penned into their own 22 for the next 12 minutes in which Park spurned a couple of try scoring possibilities with knock ons and dropped passes.

With 10 minutes to go Jonathon Mahon broke free from our 22 and broke three tackles before kicking on for Ben Traynor and Phil Champion to chase, Ben was first to the ball and popped the ball up to Phil who crashed over in the corner to put Tarleton 25-12 ahead.

The last 5 minutes of the game saw Tarleton continuing to defend and the lack of fitness was more and more evident as gaps started to appear in their defense, tackles made by Ben Traynor, Will Parker and Matt Forrest were coming thick and fast but Park had the last word with a final try in the corner through these gaps to make the final score 25-17.

A good and well needed victory for Tarleton which sees them off the bottom of the league, next



# Tarleton Rugby Union Football Club

week we are away to Birchfield RUFC and if we can put in a match performance that matches today's first half performance we have to travel their with confidence of a good result.

## **6 March 2010** **Windermere 23 Tarleton 8**

This bottom of the table clash was a crucial fixture for both sides and it was the home side that started the best with an obvious game plan of keeping the ball in the Tarleton half and using their big forwards as much as possible to drive the ball forward. A penalty for hands in the ruck after 7 minutes saw Windermere take a 3 point lead. Tarleton responded to this and advanced into the Windermere 22, winning a free kick on the 5 metre line Tarleton were bundled into touch and Mere took a quick line out and using their backs well made it all the way to the Tarleton 5mtr line. Tarleton's usual good defensive game fell apart during this period and from a penalty for killing the ball Mere crashed over in the corner to take an 8-0 lead, With 15 minutes gone Tarleton lost one of this season's influential players when Tom Eckersley was injured and this forced a re-shuffle of the pack.

Tarleton then started to claw their way back into the game, narrowly missing a penalty before Nick Whiteman took his chance with a penalty to make the score 8-3 with 2 minutes of the half remaining. A Windermere player was then sin-binned for deliberately knocking on and another penalty chance was missed by Tarleton.

The 2nd Half started with Windermere again playing a territorial game and a high kick into Tarleton's 22 was taken well by Will Fell who went on a jinking run ripping the Mere defence to pieces and when held he popped the ball to Matt Mahon who crashed over for the equalizing score.

At 8-8 it was anyone's game – Tarleton looked better with the ball in hand and made good ground without being able to break the Windermere side down whereas Windermere returning to a game of forward ball retention scored another good try in the corner, followed quickly by another 3 points for a penalty for a very late tackle by one of our players who shall remain nameless (Jonathon Mahon).

At 16 -8 Tarleton had to play catch up expansive rugby and were caught out by another good forwards try by Windermere which was converted to make the final score 23-8.

This was not a good performance by Tarleton – they were out thought by the opposition and didn't seem to be able to adapt to their game plan to thwart Windermere's. When they had the ball in hand they were a threat but again on too many occasions possession was kicked away and our lack of fitness saw too few forwards getting to each breakdown.

Next week's match is home to Hawcoat Park and we will have to up our game to gain the victory we require to get us off the bottom of the league.

## **20 February 2010** **Tarleton 7 Littleborough 15**

Tarleton welcomed another team from the top section of the league to Carr Lane and despite an early morning frost, fog, snow storms and rain the game actually started in bright sunshine!

The team that beat us 51-5 at their place had changed a bit and they appeared to have brought a younger back line to test us out. The first 25 minutes of the game saw each team attacking at every opportunity with both sides playing strong defensive rugby as well. A stalemate that was only broken when Littleborough took the lead with a penalty for being offside at the ruck.

This was slightly against the run of play as Tarleton had looked the most likely to score and you could see the confidence growing in the Tarleton players as the half progressed. A period of pressure saw Tarleton with a line out just inside the Littleborough 22 and a clean catch followed by



# Tarleton Rugby Union Football Club

shouts of 'Drive it' from the forwards saw an excellent driving maul that was finished off by Dan Hackett falling on the ball as the maul crossed Littleboroughs' line. The conversion was slotted by Nick Whiteman and Tarleton ended the first half 7-3 ahead.

The second half started similarly to the first and both teams were looking for openings, a penalty ten minutes into the half to Tarleton was wide of the mark and after 65 minutes Littleborough broke through the Tarleton defensive line to score a converted try that put the 10 – 7 in the lead.

Tarleton continued to press and started to make too many basic errors trying to play catch up rugby. A good defensive performance by Chris Thorpe at full back saw him clear the line on a number of occasions and resulted in him taking a late tackle after kicking clear. Despite the pain in his side he played on to the end only to find that he'd received a cracked rib for his troubles!

With 5 minutes to go Tarleton created 1 more chance but a Littleborough player fly hacked through and the resultant chase saw Littleborough score another try which was to prove the last play of the game and left the final score at 15-7.

This was an excellent performance by the young Tarleton side and both teams should be commended for the way the game was played. To a neutral spectator this game had everything and was a pleasure to watch, a great advert for the sport and a game to remember.

Tarletons' players all put in a 100% effort and there were some extremely tired players after the game.

Our next match is in a fortnight and is away to Windermere – this is a 'must win' game for Tarleton or relegation will become a distinct possibility.

## **13 February 2010** **Bolton 15 Tarleton 5**

For the first time for a while the Firsts found themselves with a full complement of players who turned up at Bolton to try and reverse the defeat suffered at home earlier in the season.

For the first 20 minutes of the game Tarleton took the game to Bolton and seemed to be having the better of the rucks and mauls, 15 minutes into the game this obviously had upset 1 or 2 of the Bolton forwards and one of them decided to take it out on the Tarleton Captain's face resulting in a deep gash below the left eye. The Bolton player was sin-binned for this infringement and to our surprise the Tarleton captain was also binned! Possibly for not putting up a good enough defence.

The game continued and Tarleton took the lead through an opportunist try (approx 3 metres off side) from Will Parker.

Bolton reacted to this with some good sustained attacks but Tarleton would not let them through, their stand off settled for a well worked drop goal 5 minutes before half time to make the score 5-3 to Tarleton. The next 8 minutes (yes 8) of the half saw Tarleton penalised on three occasions and each time the Bolton kicker missed his penalty including the final one that was awarded 2 minutes into overtime.

The second half started with Tarleton being awarded a penalty just inside the Bolton half this was well struck by Nick Whiteman but just didn't have the legs to clear the bar.

From this point on Bolton controlled the game, they kept the ball in the pack mostly and kept several rolling mauls going 1 of which resulted in a converted try to give Bolton a 10-5 lead. The rule changes last year were kind to us as it allowed us to bring the heavier packs down in a maul and negated their weight advantages to a great extent. This season now that this trial law has been revoked we are being out pushed in scrums and in the rucks. It was from a penalty that Bolton opted for a 5 metre scrum and scored a push over try to end the proceedings for the day. This was an improved performance compared to the 13-0 home defeat and there are sure signs



# Tarleton Rugby Union Football Club

that the squad system is starting to pay dividends.

Next week sees us at home against Littleborough who boast another large pack and will give us another hard afternoons work.

With Old Bedians beating Birchfield we are now only 2 points ahead of the drop and we need to find some inspiration from somewhere to stay in North Lancs 1.

## **6 February 2010 Tarleton 8 Trafford Metrovic 16**

This home clash brought Trafford Metrovic (3rd place from the top) to play an 18 man squad of Tarletons' First Team (3rd from bottom). We had had a close game against them early in the season at their place but they had continued to pick up points whilst we had not. They arrived full of confidence and played 90% of the first half in Tarletons half of the field. Despite this the Tarleton tackling was tremendous (we've had a lot of defensive practice this season) and some big hits went in from all players.

The silent curly haired assassin (Napps) put in an awesome amount of defensive work and some of his tackles had to be seen to be believed. Minor infringements gave Trafford three penalty attempts in the first half and they were successful with 1 giving them a 3 point lead at half time.

They doubled this lead with another penalty early in the second half and started to play a territorial game with some good penetrating kicks into our 22. On at least 2 occasions Chris Thorpe made last ditch try saving tackles and kept Tarleton in the game. The forwards played well as a unit and their reward came with a rolling maul that gained about 12 metres before Ian Simcox crashed over the line to make the score 6 - 5. The conversion was missed and the game started to open up. It was the oppositions superior fitness that probably did for Tarleton in the end with a converted try and a penalty towards the last 1/4 of the match it looked as though Metrovic were going to romp home.

Tarleton steadied themselves and started to put together some good phases of play and 1 particular break by Will Parker almost saw him through but the defender knocked the ball out of his hands just as he was going to give a try scoring pass! A late penalty under the posts was slotted by Napps and with the score at 16-8 Tarleton almost scored again but were thwarted twice on the line.

This was a very good team performance that on another day might have resulted in a victory - as it was it proved the value of fitness and support play, something Tarleton will have to improve on.

If we can play to this standard for the rest of the season relegation will not be an issue as we will pick up points!

## **23 January 2010 Didsbury TOC H 68 Tarleton 0**

Considering that we hadn't had a match for 6 weeks due to Christmas and the weather we struggled to get a squad together on the Thursday training night. Greg and Steve spent 1 1/2 hrs contacting players until we eventually ended up with 17 confirmed for the First Team and sufficient numbers for the Second Team.

However, at 10 to 12 on the Saturday we were made aware of 2 late cry-offs and so the Firsts had to travel to the top of the table team with the bare 15!

As we had lost to this team 80 - 0 at home it looked like we would suffer a similar if not worse fate at their ground. Didsbury would have been expecting to put over 100 points passed us this time and as they scored within the first 3 minutes it looked like they would. However, the Tarleton team



# Tarleton Rugby Union Football Club

played some very good defensive rugby and despite Didsbury attacking like an incoming tide with wave after wave of players trying to cross their line the half time score was only 21 - 0 to them.

It was at this point that the injuries to Dave Gordon (ankle) Chris Naish (forearm to nose) started to hurt Tarleton - these coupled to having no fresh legs to bring on saw the defensive effort wane towards the end as the players became too tired to continue at the pace they had played at during the first half. Didsbury ran in some well worked tries and the eventual score was 68 - 0.

The Tarleton XV were disappointed that they didn't cross the line and possibly could have done on 2 or 3 occasions after some really good support play saw them just short of the line before conceding possession or being penalised for an infringement.

The referee had a good game and the best team won again.

On the plus side all of Tarletons' players put in a lot of hard work and it was a welcome return to see Will Parker bursting through the defence after his self inflicted injury on holiday in the Summer.

## **12 December 2009 Garstang 25 Tarleton 8**

Tarleton arrived with only 17 players this week and for the first 10 minutes of the match they were under severe pressure from the Garstang attack. A Garstang attack was illegally stopped and from the resultant penalty the Garstang captain opted for a scrum from which their No.8 picked up and crashed over the line for the opening unconverted score.

Both sides were fairly even for most of the match as it happens but after 22 minutes a pass given out of the tackle was intercepted by a Garstang player who ran in under the posts for a converted try and a 12-0 lead. Tarleton took the game back to Garstang and were awarded a penalty in the oppositions' 22 which was slotted by Chris Thorpe.

A good run by Graham Marshall was halted and the ball ripped off him, the defender was then pounced on by a couple of marauding backs and another penalty was received. Unfortunately, Ben Kelly's standing foot slipped as he took the kick and although straight the ball fell short of clearing the upright. A further penalty was pulled by Chris Thorpe and in a brief spell 6 points had gone begging.

This left the half time score 12 – 3 to Garstang and at the start of the second half some quick ball from a ruck for the Tarleton backs saw Ben Kelly side step his opposing player and burst through the gap to score an unconverted try. At 12 – 8 Tarleton started to show some belief but a penalty for holding on was slotted by the Garstang Kicker to give them a 15-8 lead.

The line-outs didn't go to plan today and 2 messed up defensive ones gave Garstang good attacking position and meant that Tarleton had to defend for the next 15 minutes. With half an hour of the 2nd half gone Tarleton started to take chances but too often wrong options were taken with forwards kicking for position and trying to throw passes that weren't on. A penalty with 6 minutes to go gave Garstang an 18 – 8 lead and Tarleton were by now playing 'catch up' rugby and another intercepted pass gave Garstang another easy try to close off the game at 25 – 8.

This was not a bad performance by the Firsts, gifting 14 points to the opposition is never going to help so we just need to work on ball retention, support play and option taking in readiness for our final home match of the year against Trafford MV who we narrowly lost to earlier in the season.



# Tarleton Rugby Union Football Club

## **5 December 2009** **Tarleton 3 Birchfield 21**

Despite 2 late cry-offs Tarleton fielded a squad of 16 for this home match and found themselves playing against an evenly matched team. The first half was end to end rugby with Birchfield spurning the lead with two missed penalties after 8 minutes and 25 minutes. With 2 minutes to go to half time Tarleton were awarded a penalty in front of the posts for handling in the ruck and the 3 points were slotted by Phil Campion just before the half time whistle went.

Birchfield came out the stronger in the second half and started to use the rolling maul as their main weapon, gaining valuable yards each time. From one of these their attempted try was held up but from the 5mtr scrum they scored a converted push over try. Following an injury to Matt Mahon a bit of re-shuffling took place and Phil Campion moved to full back from where he made a storming 40 metre run to threaten the Birchfield defence. This came to nothing due to lack of support and Tarleton spurned two further try scoring chances by not giving the final pass when both wingers were in open space outside the centres.

Another scrum to Birchfield in Tarletons' 22 was heeled quickly, picked up at the back and resulted in another well converted try to give Birchfield a 14 -3 lead. Tarleton started to play catch up rugby then and had to take chances, bringing the full back into the line etc. From one attack the ball was lost and the Birchfield stand off put in a good kick into the Tarleton in goal area only to see Ian Simcox drop on the ball just before the Birchfield winger got there.

The final try came for Birchfield from another mid-field break down but was only scored because of a massive forward pass that one of our centres couldn't intercept because it went behind his on-rushing charge.

Overall, this was not a bad performance but for another week we failed to cross the line when we had 2 or 3 extremely good chances to do so.

We need to be more clinical and try to play to our strengths rather than play the oppositions' game. Both sides are away to Garstang next week and the Firsts are already depleted by injuries so we will be looking for players to step up to the mark and give Garstang a harder game than they experienced against us at Carr Lane.

## **28 November 2009** **Hawcoat Park 52 Tarleton First 0**

Both of Tarletons' sides found themselves playing with the bare 15 men on Saturday after several later cry-offs. The First XV arrived at Barrow to play against the usual older and bigger players and they had 3 subs to boot!

They are used to playing against teams like this and to be truthful Tarleton were the better team in the first 30 minutes of the match with lots of good attacking rugby on display but again without seeming to have the ability to turn this into good points. The closest we came was with a good move off the back of the scrum that almost saw matt Forrest dive over in the corner only to be bundled over the side line before he could touch down.

Hawcoat's No. 10 played a good kicking game and kept putting Tarleton under pressure with some good kicks into the corner, it was from one of these that a ruck formed and Tom Eckersley decided to head but and opponents knee resulting in a deep cut that necessitated him leaving the pitch for 10 minutes whilst the flow of blood was stanchd and a dressing applied. The scrum from this breakdown was won by Hawcoat and using the extra man a good try against the run of play was scored in the corner and the conversion made.

At half time with a 7-0 score line Tarleton were still in this game but the loss of Daniel Macefield with a knee injury for the remaining 30 minutes left Tarleton's defence exposed and stretched and



# Tarleton Rugby Union Football Club

Hawcoat played well to utilise this extra man advantage and scored several tries. The players and Team Management are going to have to address the problem of squad shortages in the future as we should not be losing to teams like this by 50+ points. With our allowed squad of 18 players we could well have won this game and should target this team for a win when they visit Carr Lane.

## **14 November 2009** **Hutton 12 Tarleton 7**

Tarleton arrived at Hutton for their first meeting of the season with only 2 of their number missing through injury. The weather was reasonable although the pitch was going to be heavy and slippery underfoot in the scrums. The game went pretty much as expected with some big hits going in from both sides and similar to the same fixture last season both sides not being able to cross the whitewash. The much larger Hutton pack weren't able to exert as much pressure in the set piece as they possibly could due to the conditions underfoot but the Tarleton pack held their own throughout the game.

I don't know what went on three years ago, and quite frankly I don't care, but there is an element of 'thuggery' that is creeping into each of these matches and a large number of 'afters' were spotted taking place. The general atmosphere of the game is disappointing and two fairly evenly matched teams should be allowed to play good competitive matches without the jeering etc. from fans of limited mental ability!

I found the game enjoyable to watch but it was from a mass scrap on the touchline that Hutton gained their first advantage as 5 of their players carried on with the game against 3 of ours and they managed to make 30 metres before forcing a knock on from our limited defence and from the resultant scrum they only had 8 metres to go with a well worked rolling maul to score in the corner. The try was converted and Hutton took a 7-0 lead. which seemed to fire Tarleton up to raise their game even more.

A good period of forwards phased rugby eventually saw the ball flash through the hands of the Tarleton backs and Matt Mahon spectacularly dived over in the corner (his dad thought he could have put it under the posts though) a top notch conversion from Andrew Bushell from the touchline levelled the scores.

At 7-7 the game could have gone either way - Dave Gordon left the pitch after being deliberately elbowed in the back of the neck (I'm having the photo framed) and Naishy took his place and both sides continued to probe each others defence. Both sides created chances in the last 20 minutes but it was Hutton who took the points with another rolling maul try that wasn't converted.

This should possibly be one of the league matches of the season and one, if it wasn't for the atmosphere, that could bring more spectators through the gates. I eagerly await the return at Carr Lane and hope that an equally competitive game of rugby takes place then.

## **7 November 2009** **Tarleton 29 Windermere 23**

Tarleton welcomed Windermere to Carr Lane for this mid-season relegation battle and despite driving rain and low temperatures started off the better of the two sides with Matt Forrest going over in the corner after 5 minutes and Andy Napier slotting a penalty after 8 minutes to give us a comfortable 8-0 lead.

It seemed that throughout the afternoon whenever we had a comfortable lead we took our foot of the gas and gave the advantage of dictating how the game would be played to the opposition. Windermere missed an early penalty chance after 15 minutes and then received a further penalty in our 22 5 minutes later - they took a quick tap to crash over the line and the conversion brought the score to 8-7. Tarleton had to up their game again and from a good scrum outside the Windermere 22 the ball was slipped to Andy Napier who evaded two tackles to score next to the posts and give himself an easy conversion to bring the score to 15-7.



# Tarleton Rugby Union Football Club

Some good kicking from Chris Thorpe at full-back put the Windermere defence under pressure for the next 10 minutes and a good chase by Andy Napier on the stroke of half time saw the ball charged down and as he chased it over the try line he was tackled leaving the ref with no alternative but to award the penalty try. This was converted and at 22-7 this was a fair reflection of how the game was going.

Unfortunately Tarleton came out in the 2nd half appeared to come out thinking that the game was won and allowed Windermere too much possession and you could visibly see them growing in confidence as the half progressed. A Penalty for offside was slotted by the Windermere kicker to bring the score to 22-10 and 5 minutes later yet another penalty outside our 22 was awarded for crossing and Windermere, full of confidence, took a quick one and made it over the whitewash for an un-converted try. 22-15 and the pressure was all on Tarleton, a good forward drive was stopped on the 22 by Tarleton and one of the Windermere forwards suffered a neck injury and the game was delayed for 10 minutes whilst we swapped pitches.

Tarleton re-commenced in a more positive frame of mind and played some good rugby for the next 10 minutes or so but were penalised for being offside again and the Windermere kicker pulled the ball wide - in our generosity we tried to charge the penalty down resulting in a re-take which this time was slotted. With the score at 22-18 and about 12 minute to go Tarleton's players and spectators nerves were jangling and after another good period of pressure by the Tarleton pack a quick strike and a jinking run from Jonathon Mahon saw him evade the Windermere defence to score under the posts leaving Andy Napier an easy conversion to make the final score 29-23.

It was a victory, but one that should have been so much easier, quite frankly our second half display was dire and we still insist in trying to pass balls when we are being thrown to the ground which usually results in an advantage to the opposition.

Let's see more at training this Thursday and a more positive attitude during the game away against Hutton next week for the whole 80 minutes. This is a game that we could win with the right approach and support play but if we play like we did this week we may regret it.

## **31 October 2009 Littleborough 51 Tarleton 5**

This was a match that can only be classed as 'A bad day at the office'. With 8 players unavailable through injury, other commitments and runny noses we ended up with a squad of only 16 for this game. Early signs were good though with the forwards winning a good scrum in the Littleborough half, giving the backs quick ball who moved it through their hands quickly to put Graham Marshall in at the corner. Five minutes gone, 5-0 up - Happy Days!

Unfortunately from this moment on the Littleborough side took the initiative and started to run the game. Our pack didn't play to their usual standard and a pushover try for Littleborough was converted to give them the lead after 16 minutes. For the next 10 minutes Tarleton were on their own try line resisting Littleborough attacks and 'holding up' 2 try opportunities. A good break out from Tarleton's line saw them with an opportunity to test the Littleborough No.15 and a high kick was launched - the full-back took it well and proceeded to sell more dummies than Mothercare and beat 5 players to score a 50 metre individual try. (26 minutes). The remainder of the first half was also spent defending and an intercepted pass on the try line saw Chris Gordon sprint 4yds before the ref blew up for offside??? The resulting penalty was potted and at half time Littleborough led 15 - 5.

Tarleton started the 2nd half well but injuries to Graham Marshall and Ben Kelly saw us having to play out the remaining game with 14 men and a spat between Tim Holloway and one of Littleboroughs backs over handbag colours or similar resulted in a 10 minute spell were Tarleton only had 13 players on the pitch and the gaps looked even bigger. To their credit Littleborough played some good rugby and took every opportunity on offer to score. Tarleton, who usually tackle for 80 minutes put in a lack-lustre defensive display for the remainder of the game. Every missed



# Tarleton Rugby Union Football Club

tackle (and there were quite a few) generally resulted in a try to Littleborough and an unfit pack were not getting to breakdowns, winning line-outs or dominating the scrums. This coupled to the extra man gave Littleborough an easy afternoon and 2 vital points for them.

Old Bedians have been docked 2 points for some reason or other and so they hold up the league with ) points, Windermere are next bottom with 0 points and then Tarleton are on 2 points. We play a 'Must Win' game on Saturday and if we can beat Windermere and Hutton over the next 2 weeks we will rocket up the league. I think if we can get 12 or 14 points this season we will be safe from the drop. This will not happen if we do not approach these games with a bit more commitment and dedication than was shown this Saturday. Have a drink after the match rather than the night before and maybe we will be able to compete.

Fitness is also an issue and that is not going to improve if you don't turn up to train or carry out some training of your own if you are unavailable on Thursday nights. Littleborough are not 46 points better than the first team and it is hoped that we will give them a better game when they visit Carr Lane.

## **24 October 2009 Tarleton 0 Bolton 13**

With an enforced change of 7 players from last week's victory this was always going to be a difficult game for the firsts to win. Even with home advantage we had probably lost too many key players at once to expect anything other than a hard afternoon of defensive rugby. However, the spirit shown by all players was tremendous and I dread to think what the eventual tackle count was. If anything Tarleton were in control of the game for most of the first half and despite probably 70 -80% of the possession they were unable to break a well organised and resolute Bolton defensive line. Tom Eckersley twice crashed over the line only to be held up by 3 or 4 Bolton players each time.

The first chance of points came at 26 minutes when Tarleton were awarded a penalty just inside the Bolton half. The high, gusting wind was always going to make kicking a bit of a lottery and the kick sailed wide of the right hand upright.

Half time saw a 0-0 score line and Bolton, now playing with the wind, started to exert pressure with some good tactical kicking. 10 minutes into the second half after 3 or 4 scrums for Bolton in the Tarleton 22 the pressure eventually told and from a rolling maul the Bolton forwards powered over for the first points of the match. Tarleton's heads didn't go down though and they kept attacking, looking for Boltons' weak spots but a good kick from their stand-off saw a fumble in our 22 resulting in another Bolton scrum. From this they again tried to organise a rolling maul and as more and more of our players were 'sucked in' to defend this the gaps opened out wide and a long pass saw their winger crash over the whitewash in the corner.

Tarleton came back again and should really have scored when they had a 2 man overlap in the backs but the ball was kicked for the chase instead of going through the hands and the chance went begging. With 6 minutes to go Bolton kept the ball in Tarletons' half and tried a couple of drop goals one of which was successful leaving the final score at 13-0.

Despite the defeat this was another good effort by Tarleton and we should be targeting the return fixture as a possible 2 pointer. The pack held their own for most of the first half and runs by Tom Eckersley and Dave Gordon with good scavenging skills shown by Dale Turner were high points of the game. The second half saw them tire and scrums started to go backwards and therefore the backs didn't get as much good ball to work with as they had in the first half. We even lost the drinking game and the raffle in the clubhouse after the match!

Next week sees the First Team travel to Littleborough to play another hard game - Littleborough have won 5 from 7 but only just beat Old Bedians and Bolton so we should be able to give them a hard game if we get our full squad to the game!



# Tarleton Rugby Union Football Club

**17 October 2009**  
**Old Bedians 15 Tarleton 25**

An early kick off had been arranged to enable players to get back early to get ready for the Ball and with a squad of 18 on paper we found ourselves 2 players down (1 overslept and 1 confirmed then was injured but didn't let me know) and 1 missing as he was driven all over Manchester picking up raffle prizes for the night! Our scrum half eventually arrived with 15 minutes to spare so Tarleton took to the field with a re-arranged side and 1 substitute.

Tarleton started well and for the first 1/4 of an hour they pressed hard but Old Bedians defence held out - with 16 minutes gone Gareth Rogerson broke off a ruck and managed to break through the gain line and popped the ball out of the tackle to Archie Skofic who went in next to the posts to open the scoring. Andrew Bushell converted and Tarleton took a 7-0 lead.

From the re-start Tarleton (as they do) switched off, no one attacked the ball and Old Bedians were awarded a scrum just outside our 22 in a good attacking position, 2 re-sets were necessary and from the 3rd. attempt the ball was struck quickly by Old Bedians and fast ball along the line saw their winger go in at the corner. The conversion was missed and at 7-5 the game started to ebb and flow and it was difficult to see who was going to score next.

A good break by Ben Kelly saw Old Bedians on the back foot and although he was tackled we had plenty of support and a try looked on until an Old Bedian player killed the ball and a penalty was awarded which Andrew Bushell potted to give Tarleton a 5 point lead.

With 5 minutes to go Naishy was sin binned for allegedly killing the ball and it looked as though we would survive the half a man down but Old Bedians weren't finished yet. After a break for an injury they won the resulting scrum against the head and quick ball to their left wing saw him charge down the touch line and despite a despairing tackle by Chris Thorpe he was able to touch down for an unconverted try that equalled the score at half time.

Straight after the re-start Old Bedians exerted some terrific pressure on the Tarleton defence and a miss pass move and kick from our 22 saw their winger beat our defence to the ball to give Old Bedians a 15-10 lead.

At this point Tarleton suddenly realised that they were in danger of losing this match and started to play some good rugby, short bursts and fast ball saw Old Bedians chasing shadows and tackling after the ball had gone which created gaps for our players to exploit. Gareth Rogerson was given the ball from one of these flowing moves and beat his defender to score in the corner (he's deadly from 6 metres) to level the scores at 15-15.

They now found some self belief and their better fitness saw them running the Old Bedians defence ragged but still unable to take the lead. Another good break involving Ben Kelly and Andrew Bushell saw good ground gained, Jon Tyrer came in on an extremely good line and made more yards before Naishy received the ball and somehow managed to do what can only be described as a back-flip over the line to score a try under the posts which Andrew Bushell converted.

22-15 with 5 minutes to go and Tarleton had to defend again but some good play at the breakdown just inside our half saw Old Bedians offside and a penalty was awarded. With 2 minutes to go the decision was taken to take the kick at goal, mainly to wind the clock down, but Andrew Bushell stroked the ball over with millimetres to spare to give Tarleton a 25-15 victory.

Man of the Match was Gareth Rogerson and we will need to play better than this next week to take the points against Bolton at home. We let Old Bedians off the hook in the first half when we had two good chances to score but the clinical pass wasn't given on both occasions and an obvious overlap in each case was ignored and points missed. At this level we have to take these points if we are going to compete and players awareness of who is on their shoulder will also have to improve.



# Tarleton Rugby Union Football Club

**10 October 2009**

**Tarleton 0 Didsbury Toc H 80**

This was going to be another tough match (it should get a little easier over the next couple of weeks) and watching the Didsbury side warm up I could see that they were 'up for it!' I've been watching Senior Amateur Rugby for many years and I have to say that this was the best team performance that I have seen in the last 5 years.

These players probably have an average age of 27, have played together for some time and are at the peak of their fitness (with no exceptions). For the first 10 minutes the game was fairly even but in reality Didsbury were probably just looking for a weakness and after 12 minutes they found it.

They had three or four players who were rather stocky to say the least, No.12, No.5 and No.8 and these 3 kept driving at the Tarleton defensive line drawing two players in to bring them down and popping the ball out of the tackle to an equally strong runner - something had to give and Tarleton's defence crumbled..

Tarleton still made a few hundred tackles during the game but so slick were the ball carriers that only on about 5 occasions did the ball actually go to ground when the tackle was made. They were all adept at passing out of the tackle and often had 2 options at the time - this is hours of practice on their training night coming to fruition. Most of their tries came from this sort of play - we held them at the set pieces but in open play they were awesome and all over us like a rash. The sheer physicality of all of the Didsbury players was difficult for our smaller players to deal with. Tarleton still played through to the end and the match ended with Tarleton breaking out of their own 22 only for a pass to be intercepted by a Didsbury centre and the final score of the game was converted.

This is where we should be looking to be in 2 or 3 years time when our young squad has beefed up and more importantly played together longer to develop the sort of understanding that Didsbury have. More players at training would be a start.

This was a sobering experience for many of the players who have probably never been thrashed like this before; had their kicker had his kicking boots on the defeat could have been even heavier.

There were positives, we defended well for long periods of the game but whenever a tackle was missed ( 1 in 12 or so) Didsbury were in to score. We need to work on better ball-retention at the breakdown as if the opposition don't have the ball they can't score. Our scrums and line-outs were still steady and our tackling on the whole was good. We were just beaten by a bigger, better side on the day. Our target when we go to their place will be to play to our strengths not theirs!

Next week we are away at Old Bedians who have a similar playing record to ourselves and we should be looking to come away with something from this fixture.

**3 October 2009**

**De La Salle Salford 43 Tarleton 0**

This weeks encounter was against another team with a 100% win record in North Lancs 1 and our arrival was greeted with lashing rain and howling, gusting winds (that's Manchester for you) and looked as though it would be a day for keeping the ball close.

For the first 25 minutes the game was evenly balanced and, in my opinion, against the run of play De La Salle took the first points with the most blatant forward pass that was missed by the referee (he made up for it later by calling De La Salle back for a forward pass that had gone at least 3 yards backwards).

Tarleton were penalised 5 minutes later for 'holding on' and De La Salle took the option to kick into the corner and from the resulting line out went over in the corner again to make the score 10-0. Tarleton had to defend a lot for the remaining minutes of the half and almost kept D.L.S. out but 6



# Tarleton Rugby Union Football Club

minutes into injury time (again it's a Manchester thing) they went in under the posts and the successful conversion made the half time score 17-0.

The half time talk was again about keeping the ball in hand and using the wind as DLS had to keep the play in the oppositions' 22. As in the first half the opening 20 minutes or so of the second half saw lots of attacks, tackling and set pieces but no points. However, Tarleton were finding themselves pulled all over the pitch and committing too many players to a defensive ruck saw an opportunity for their fly-half to loop a long pass out to the winger who ran in unopposed to make the score 22-0.

The next try was again debatable as it came from a scrum that wheeled 180 degrees and should have been re-set; however, their No. 8 picked it up and scored a try that was converted to make the score 29-0. Tarletons tackling had been none stop through the 2nd half and D.L.S. started finding small gaps to break through as the Tarleton defensive line faltered a bit. Their No. 16 broke through the line to score a good individual try and at 36-0 and 15 minutes to go they were scenting a 50 point win. However, Tarleton kept up their tackling and the final score for D.L.S. came from the award of a Free-Kick for a line-out ball not travelling 5mts. (surely this should have been a scrum) they took it quickly and made some quick yards before being stopped on our 22 where they won a scrum and from this scored a rolling maul try in the corner which was converted.

So a 43-0 defeat but a game that would have been closer had some of the decisions gone our way. Our jumpers were impeded in every line-out (see photos on facebook) and this was never picked by the ref. so we lost a lot of ball that should have been ours, 2 or 3 dubious tries awarded and our best chances of scoring both kicked away unnecessarily. To put all this in perspective the First XV have played 5 games and lost 4, 3 of the 4 teams that we have lost to are still unbeaten and are the top 3 in the league, the 4th. Team have lost to one of these and so we will be facing teams of similar skill levels to ourselves over the next few weeks and we need to take points wherever we can.

## **26 September 2009 Tarleton 22 Bury 12**

Tarleton welcomed Bury to Carr Lane knowing that this was going to be a tough match but also realising if they could play at the pace and style of last week they had a good chance of taking the points.

From the kick off Tarleton played textbook rugby at a frantic, controlled pace, putting phases together and using pods of forwards exactly as practiced at training on Thursday. Quite frankly Bury couldn't deal with this constant high speed pressure and hardly touched the ball for the first 16 minutes of the game. In this time we had scored a well worked try between Jonathon Mahon and Tim Holloway (10 minutes) after the Bury defence had been pulled in two different directions leaving a big hole for them to run through and for Tim to touch down with the Bury full-back vainly trying to get under the ball.

Whenever Bury got the ball they played a similar game and tried to stretch Tarleton's defence but good organisation kept the numbers on either side of the rucks even and Bury were frustrated time after time. Where we fell down today was the number of penalties we conceded for offside, hands in, crossing etc. that gave Bury's kicker easy points. After 16 minutes an offside penalty in front of the posts gave Bury 3 easy points and they seemed to grow in confidence and started to come back at Tarleton.

However, 3 minutes later Bush broke through the middle of their attacking line with the ball in hand and raced in to score a great individual try, he pulled the conversion to the left but at 12-3 Tarleton appeared to be in the ascendancy. Four minutes later a dropped pass cost us another golden opportunity to score in the corner after some good forward play had released the back line who came at Bury at full pace. Tarleton seemed to go off the boil from this point and before half time Bury came back into the game with 2 penalties (a dubious deliberate knock on and offside at the ruck) which their kicker slotted with consummate ease. Just before the break Tarleton lost Rob



# Tarleton Rugby Union Football Club

Bramhall (ankle) who was taken to hospital for x-rays and had played really well up to then.

So 12 -9 as the second half started and it could have gone either way, Tarletons' composure wasn't there and the first 10 minutes was a scrappy affair. Tarleton received a welcome penalty which was slotted (15-9) and then gave Bury another 3 points for handling in the ruck again! At 15-12 Tarleton received a penalty just inside the Bury half and Jonathon Mahon took a quick tap and was away through the Bury defence as the Bury defence closed the gap he popped the ball to Archie Skofic who isn't going to be stopped from that distance. The try was converted and although Bury attacked for the next 8 or so minutes the Tarleton defence held firm.

First points of the season then, a 22-12 win that could, and should have been nearer to 40-12. The team are going to have to take these try scoring opportunities if they are to progress as this League would appear to be very competitive and positions could well be decided on points difference and we need to turn our periods of possession into more points than we are taking at the moment. On the down side we have also lost 2 out of 3 man of the match drinking races and I am looking for improvements in this area as well next week.

## **Trafford MV 19 Tarleton 13 19 September 2009**

Tarleton travelled to high flying Trafford MV on Saturday knowing that the odds were on an extremely difficult game. Trafford MV had annihilated Windermere 78-0 and beaten Hutton at their ground last Saturday. With 2 defeats under their belt Tarleton were viewing this game with some trepidation which was noticeable in the pre-match dressing room atmosphere. The odds were on a heavy defeat but this was not a day for the bookies.

From the outset it was clear that both teams were playing a quick tempo game utilising 2 sets of strong running backs. Tarleton, although lighter in the pack were holding their own and with improved line outs were maintaining a much better percentage of the possession. Ferocious tackling from both sides kept the game scoreless until the 10th minute when a penalty was awarded to Tarleton who took the 3 points gratefully. Unfortunately the scores were level after 15 minutes when Tarleton were deemed to be killing the ball. A further offside infringement after 18 minutes gave Trafford a further 3 points and the game continued to ebb and flow. Trafford received another penalty in the 25th. minute and rather than kick for the corner, which they had tried previously, they took the points to take a 9-3 lead.

Both defences continued to keep out their opposition attacks and after the first phased play that Tarleton managed they found themselves with a scrum in a good attacking position just inside Trafford MV's 22. However, the scrum was lost and the Trafford MV No. 8 picked up, passed to his scrum half who was tackled by our winger but not before he had passed the ball to their winger who ran 50 yds to score a good breakaway try to break the deadlock. The conversion was missed and it looked as though Trafford were happy to wind down the clock to half time with a 14-3 lead.

Tarleton weren't about to stop trying and another good phase of play in the last two minutes saw them gifted a penalty by Traffords' pack and this was slotted to leave the half time score at 14-6. Trafford MV's tactics changed slightly in the second half and they were relying on keeping it in the forwards more and kicking for position rather than risk throwing the ball out wide, a sensible idea when your 8 points ahead. The former tactic resulted in a forwards try for Trafford following a rolling maul from an attacking scrum in Tarleton's 22. This conversion was also missed and Trafford now led 19 - 6.

The effort in attack and defence that the heavier players of Trafford MV had put in started to show and holes were beginning to appear in their defence. From one of their attacks that broke down in Tarletons' 22 our centre put up a Garry Owen that was caught by Ben Traynor who beat his man and flipped it to Graham Marshall who sprinted 60 yards (just evading an ankle tap by Trafford's Billy Whiz winger) to score under the posts. The conversion was taken and Tarleton found themselves 6 points behind with 8 minutes to go. Trafford decided that they were playing this in Tarletons half and kicked for position on a couple of occasions, the latter leading to a Tarleton



# Tarleton Rugby Union Football Club

surge into Trafford MV's 22. With the try line beckoning the ball was knocked on due to the close proximity of 2 Trafford defenders and Tarletons' last chance had gone.

If Tarleton didn't have self-belief before this match they should have it now. The rugby they played both in defence and in attack was from the top drawer - with a bit more fitness and a little bit of luck they would have won this game and when everyone concerned with this league would have expected to read of a Tarleton thrashing by Trafford MV the result should send ripples through North Lancs 1. However, that's 3 matches played and 3 matches lost, with injured players coming back into contention the First Team places are going to have to be earned and a similar attitude as displayed in this match against Bury at home on Saturday should see us take our first step on the points ladder.

## **12 September 2009 Tarleton 0 Garstang 27**

On a day made for rugby Garstang arrived to test our young team in this higher division. From the kick off Tarleton had the best of the early phases but were guilty of panicking a bit and throwing the ball around when passes weren't really on. After 15 minutes the Garstang Centres pounced on one of these loose passes and drove through the Tarleton defence to open the scoring.

Despite some periods of good play and good scrummaging our line-outs and open play were not up to Garstangs standards and they were grabbing the bulk of the possession. Their big centres and second row players put our defensive tackling to the test and despite a lot of good defence we continued to leak points.

Garstangs support play was far superior to ours on the day and they ran out worthy winners.

The disappointment for us was that despite several good phases of play we did not cross the Garstang whitewash and this has to be improved upon in the future when the chance arrives. Too often we kicked possession away and lost the chance of continuing with some phased passages of play.

From first impressions it would appear that this is the type of team we are going to play against on most Saturdays this season and we need to keep to the game plan if we are to find a way around or through the oppositions defense, I believe that this team are more than capable of doing this and just have to work on their fitness a bit, stop drinking till 6.00am on a match day and take onto the field of play the basics that are worked on in training.

Next weeks match is away to high flying Trafford MV who are unbeaten and won at Hutton yesterday - this will be another hard match and will give us a chance to see if we can get our tactics right against this sort of team.

## **5 September 2009 Ashton Under Lyne 17 Tarleton 7**

At last the first match of the season dawned and at the 11th hour our squad of 18 confirmed players suddenly dropped to 16 with 1 late cry-off (no time to source another player) and 1 no show. The depleted squad arrived in dribs and drabs (this will have to improve a meet time is given for a reason) but eventually all 16 warmed up as a squad and prepared for the encounter to come.

As last season we came up against a bigger, older pack who were going to push us all over the field and mess up our scrums and line-outs - this wasn't the case though as the Tarleton pack more than held their own in the set piece against Aston U Lyne's much heavier 8. Where their extra beef counted more was in open play as their big 2nd Rows and No. 8 managed to break the game line on a number of occasions and create good attacking opportunities for their side.

One of the things tarleton do well is tackle and the game was a stalemate for the first 18 minutes when tarleton received a penalty in front of the posts which should have put them 3 - 0 up and



# Tarleton Rugby Union Football Club

settled the game down, however, an off the ball incident whilst Chris Thorpe was lining up his kick resulted in a reversed penalty and 3 points went begging. Let's make this the last piece of indiscipline this season - we can't afford to waste any scoring opportunities like this in the future.

The constant tackling was beginning to wear down the Tarleton defence and at the 25 minute mark a maul dragged in too many of our players and using quick ball the opposition got the ball quickly across their back line to score in the corner. The try was converted and Ashton went 7-0 up and this was how it stayed till half time.

Ashton came out the better in the early part of the 2nd half and took a drop goal about 7 minutes in to go 10-0 up. From this point Tarleton started to move the ball along the line better and started to stretch the Ashton defence this led to a penalty for offside which was quickly taken by Lee Waddell who crashed over the line from 5 metres and Chris Thorpe slotted the conversion. 10 - 7  
Game on!

Unfortunately, Tarleton although chasing the game a bit were guilty of panicking a bit and over elaborating moves and several good chances went begging. With 10 minutes to go Tarleton pressed a bit too hard and their winger kicked through and pounced on the ball to score a good individual try which was well converted. With 5 minutes left 17-7 was just too much for Tarleton to pull back and although they had another good chance with one of Grizz's pacey runs down the wing the support wasn't there to capitalise on this.

All in all this was a good start with a newish team and although a defeat there were a lot of positives. Next week we play Garstang at home and this will be a similar type of team as today's so we need to get the basics right to improve on today's result.

*Scorers: Lee Waddell (1 try), Chris Thorpe (1 conversion)*



# Tarleton Rugby Union Football Club

## **Second XV (The Nomads)**

No Match Reports provided.

## **Under 19s (Senior Colts)**

No Match Reports provided.

## **Under 17s (Junior Colts)**

No Match Reports provided.



# Tarleton Rugby Union Football Club

## Under 16s

**14 February 2010**  
**Blackpool 0 Tarleton 53**

For the second time in 7 days Tarleton travelled to the Fylde coast, this time to play Blackpool, where Blackpool proved to be welcoming hosts before, and after the match.

It was good to see Tarleton players Tom Wignall, Joe Castell, Sam Cleaver, and Sei Kato back from injury, and keen to make their mark on the game.

Tarleton put pressure on Blackpool from the kick-off, and a good break from full-back Tom Hill gave Jordan Dawson the chance to use his speed, and side-step to score Tarleton's first try, which was unconverted.

Blackpool came back strongly, causing Tarleton problems in the mauls, and rucks, but good defence from Tarleton saw Tom Hill take the ball to just short of the Blackpool 22-metre line, and from the resulting scrum, Ben Waring went over for Tarleton's second try, converted by Alex Rigby.

Tarleton's scrum-half Stuart Mayer had been combining well with forward Bevan Taylor, and between them created the next two Tarleton trys, one for Alex Rigby, and Jordan Dawson's second. Both trys were unconverted and Tarleton led 22-0 at half-time.

The second-half started with Tarleton's Tom Hill taking a pass on the half-way line, and his speed helped him score near the posts, with the conversion from Alex Rigby.

Blackpool had made several attacks in the second-half, but the Tarleton defence stood firm, where good forward play from Tarleton saw Bevan Taylor score Tarleton's sixth try, converted by Alex Rigby.

In the second-half Tarleton's threequarters had been resolute in defence, and opportunistic in attack, giving Dan Cromack the chance to score under the posts, with Dan converting his own try.

Back from injury saw Tarleton's Joe Castell, and Sei Kato show that it won't be long before they are back to their best, with Sei running in Tarleton's eighth try, with Liam Dodd using his speed on the wing to land Tarleton's final try, leaving Tarleton victors at the final whistle.

Another good refereeing performance, helped the game to flow, where Blackpool had created a number of good chances, with the score not reflecting the the commitment, and determination shown by Blackpool.

**7 February 2010**  
**Fylde 7 Tarleton 17**

Tarleton travelled to Lytham to play Fylde in their first match of 2010, as frozen pitches had caused 4-previous scheduled games to be cancelled.

From the kick-off Fylde showed strength in both forwards, and backs by making strong runs into the Tarleton half, which resulted in a well constructed try for Fylde, which was converted, giving Fylde a 7-0 lead early in the first-half.

Honours were even for the rest of the first-half, with Tarleton cancelling out many strong attacks from Fylde, and putting in counter attacks, when shortly before half-time, Tarleton scrum-half Stuart Mayer made a good break, linking-up with fly-half Alex Rigby, and with good handling from the Tarleton centres Jordan Dawson, and Dan Cromack took the play to within 20-metres of the Fylde line, and a scrum to Tarleton. From this scrum Tarleton were able to move the ball along the back-line, and a ruck near the Fylde line enabled Tarleton forward Bevan Taylor to carry the ball



# Tarleton Rugby Union Football Club

over for Tarleton's first unconverted try, leaving Fylde ahead by 7-5 at the half-time whistle.

The second half saw Fylde take the game to Tarleton, but Tarleton were proving strong in defence, with good tackling from Tom Walmsley, Tom Johnson, and Bradley Jones, gave Tarleton the opportunity to win the ball in the loose, which left the Tarleton threequarter line able to gain valuable ground, eventually leading to Tarleton forward Tom Waring linking-up with his back line, and produced a well deserved try for Tom Waring, which was converted by Alex Rigby, giving Tarleton the lead at 7-12.

Fylde continued to produce good rugby, and never dropped their heads, giving Tarleton more to think about in defence of their line, which led to Tarleton hooker Bradley Jones winning the ball against the head, giving Tarleton scrum-half Stuart Mayer the opportunity to start a play with Alex Rigby, and Jordan Dawson, leading to Tarleton winger Rob Hayton, whom had put in good defensive work with strong tackles, being rewarded shortly before the end of the match with a strong run from the Fylde 22-metre line, which took Rob past four Fylde players to score an unconverted try in the corner.

Fylde would not "lie down", and in the last 10-minutes Tarleton had to withstand attack, after attack from Fylde, and the final score of 7-17 in Tarleton's favour did not reflect how close the match had been, with credit to both sides for producing an excellent clean game of rugby, which was enhanced by an excellent referee, whom took time out to explain to the boys why he had made certain decisions. Scrum-half Stuart Mayer took a battering in the match, but this did not stop him from causing all sorts of problems throughout the game, with support for Stuart coming from Tom, and Ben Waring, and Tom Johnson, all contributing to supporting the ball carrier at all times.

A special thanks to Tarleton forwards Tom Walmsley, and Matthew Pye, whom had both won a number of lineouts against the Fylde "put-in", apart from their stirring work in defence. Their tackle count, along with Liam Dodd's, must be one of the highest tackle-counts the three players have made during their career at Tarleton.

Hugo Faria was tireless in his efforts to carry the ball forward, and with Bevan Taylor showed good defence with many strong tackles.

Tarleton coaches Paul Cromack, Peter Dawson, and Phil Johnson paid tribute to all the Tarleton, and Fylde players, with both sides playing their part in an excellent game of Rugby Union football.

## **20 September 2009** **Blackburn 0 Tarleton 55**

On a fine, sunny day Tarleton travelled to Blackburn for their first game of the 2009-10 season, without regulars Tom Johnson, Jordan Haworth (Lancs.U16's Final Trial), Joe Castell, and Sei Kato (both injured).

The start of the match saw good handling from the Tarletons threequarters, and combined with early control from Tarleton forwards, enabled Bevan Taylor to score Tarleton's first try, which was unconverted.

From the restart Tarleton took the play to the Blackburn 22-metre line, and from the resulting scrum Tarleton hooker, Bradley Jones, won the ball against the head, giving Dan Cromack the chance to pick-up from the back of the scrum, and score Tarleton's second try, which was unconverted.

Blackburn pushed Tarleton back to their 22-metre line from the restart, but from some courageous play by Tarleton scrum-half Stuart Mayer, saw Tarleton take play back to the Blackburn 22-metre line, where a well timed pass from Dan Cromack, gave Tom Hill the opportunity to use his speed, and sidestep, to score his first try for Tarleton since joining from Southport in the close season.



# Tarleton Rugby Union Football Club

Blackburn never let their heads drop, and continued to attack at every opportunity, but good handling from Tarletons Jordan Dawson, Tom Hill, and Tom Walmsley, gave Tarleton forwards Tom Waring, Matthew Pye, and Dan Cromack the opportunity to each score trys, and with a conversion from Alex Rigby, gave Tarleton a 34-0 lead at half-time.

Blackburn started the second-half with strong attacks down the middle, with the Blackburn fullback playing a major part in each attack, by putting some well directed kicks towards the Tarleton try line, but some poor handling by Blackburn saw Tarleton forwards Tom Cowin, Ben Waring, and Matthew Bretherton win good turnover ball in the loose, and after a penalty conversion from Tarleton's Alex Rigby, Alex then converted his own try from the restart, extending Tarleton's lead to 44-0.

Jordan Dawson, and Liam Dodd had been causing problems for the Blackburn defence for most of the match, and were both rewarded with a try each, and with both trys being converted by Alex Rigby gave Tarleton 58-0 victory at full-time.

Both sides must be congratulated on their fair play, with Blackburn being most generous in defeat, and never stopped trying to play attacking rugby.

With respect to Blackburn, Tarletons away match next week in the Lancashire Cup against Preston Grasshoppers, will be a much harder test for Tarleton, as Preston Grasshoppers have several Lancashire Under 16's, and Sale Sharks Academy players in their squad.



# Tarleton Rugby Union Football Club

## Under 15s

**28th April 2010**

**North Lancs v Merseyside v Manchester**

**Tarleton strength helps win Lancashire Glory** This week saw the inaugural U15 District Festival which pitted the best the 3 North West counties has to offer against each other.

Paul Cromack and Phil Johnson (Tarleton RUFC) took their squad to Liverpool St Helens to face the strong opposition.

Their squad, selected in September by independent selectors, was made up of players selected from all clubs in North Lancashire and featured no less than 8 Tarleton U15s.



Ryan Ball  
Ollie Barham  
Jordan Bickerstaffe  
Craig Bretherton  
Elliot Burton  
James Maguire  
Jake Mann  
Dan Procter

North Lancs played Manchester first and this game could have gone either way. The final score of 12-7 didn't really reflect the game however the not one but two disallowed tries would have extended the Lancs lead even further.

Lancs remained on the pitch and went straight into the second game with Merseyside. Perhaps the fresh legs of Merseyside were invaluable as they took an early lead. When Lancs replied they scored once more keeping the festival alive. From somewhere Lancs found some strength, well actually it was found on the bench in the shape of Ryan Ball who came straight on and scored to set up a thrilling finale.

The last 10 minutes was literally end to end stuff with Lancs having the better chances. One of them paid off and they took the lead for the lead late on to win 19-12.

Although no award was given, player of the festival for me was Ollie Barham who put in a blinding performance keeping out several certain tries and taking the game to the opposition at every opportunity.

The Tarleton players are extremely proud to have represented the district and will continue to put the club on the map next season I'm sure.

**25 April 2010**

**Liverpool St Helens 0 Tarleton 30\***

Tarleton U 15 ended their season with an emphatic victory over LSH. Their dominance was apparent from early in the game when Matt Oshinowo scored the opener.

Wearing their fluorescent tour kit Tarleton played uphill first half. LSH put up a good fight especially in the forwards but good organization gave Tarleton the upper hand. Tarleton were



# Tarleton Rugby Union Football Club

especially strong in the mauls with James Harrison and Jordan Bickerstaffe working hard with Craig Bretherton to drive the opposition back. When the ball was released to the backs Tarleton also dominated with exciting running lines opening up gaps in the centre but especially on the wing.

With further tries first half from James Maguire (2), Ollie Barham and Will Booth and conversions by Jake Mann and Aidan Miller it looked like the visitors would run away with it.

LSH came out much stronger second half and, given the uphill battle they had ahead, showed strong resolve and if anything improved as the game went on. Tarleton only managed a further 2 tries in the second half through Matt Oshinowo and Nick Garden.

Notable performances today from all the usual suspects, in fact everyone played well.

Dan Walton continues to go from strength to strength and Jake was also a candidate for player of the match but James Maguire once again pipped it for his strength both in the tackle and when running.

This season has been a bit of a roller coaster with the massive unbeaten run at the start through our "defeat" at the hands of the Rochdale ref! to our current unbeaten run which started well before our tour. Tarleton U15s have ended their season playing the best rugby they ever have and with commitment and hard work next year should finally be challenging the big 3 clubs.

**28 March 2010**  
**Tarleton 0 Rossendale 5**  
**Ormskirk 10 Rossendale 5**  
**Tarleton 0 Ormskirk 10**

This weekend Tarleton held a triangular fixture with Rossendale and, local rivals, Ormskirk.

First game on was Tarleton v Rossendale and as both sides have similar numbers this was always going to be close. Close it was with neither side being able to break through in the first half.

Tarleton elected to play into the driving wind first half and did well to hold off the strong Dale pack. With Dale held for the first half things should have been easier second half for the home side but while they did have more possession they were unable to capitalize. Rossendale broke away through the centre mid way through the second half but despite Tarleton's best efforts they couldn't get back on terms. Rossendale won the shortened game 0-5 and avenged their defeat earlier in the season.

The second game on was Ormskirk v Rossendale and what I saw of it looked every bit as close as the previous match. Dale took the lead early on but Ormskirk proved just too strong winning the match by 2 tries to 1.

The final game was a repeat of last weeks fixture and Ormskirk looked like they meant business. Tarleton were somewhat struggling for numbers with three players helping the 16's to victory over Rochdale in the Lancs Plate semi final and several injuries from the first game. Four under 14's were brought in to make up the numbers and the game was on. Ormskirk played with the slight wind advantage first half and at the break Tarleton were 5 points down. Given the Ormskirk size advantage and the players Tarleton had missing this was a creditable first half performance and to be only 5 points down was unexpected.

Tarleton knew from last week's match that they could overturn this score and came out second half all guns blazing. With the wind with them they pressed Ormskirk and eventually scored themselves and the spectators cheered the try. Unfortunately the ref wasn't best placed to see it and by the time he got there a hand had found it self under the ball and "held up" was the decision. This could have been the turning point Tarleton had needed but it wasn't to be and when a mistake gifted Ormskirk another 5 points against the run of play they knew it was not their day.



# Tarleton Rugby Union Football Club

Take nothing away from Ormskirk this was a good win and a much better performance than the 31 – 12 defeat last week but credit must go to Tarleton 15s and 14s also for holding this strong side to 10 points.

All of today's games were played in a very competitive but friendly manner and all players were a credit to their clubs. It was a privilege to host this fixture and hope it can be repeated next year.

## **21 March 2010 Tarleton 31 Ormskirk 12**

Ormskirk U15s visited Tarleton this week and arrived with good numbers.

As this fixture has fallen victim to the weather twice, both sides were looking forward to it. With both sides now out of the cup competition all that was to play for, in this local derby, was school yard bragging rights but at U15s that is worth playing for.

The first half for Tarleton was mostly defensive and with a strong Ormskirk side pressing them only managed to threaten twice in the first half, not capitalizing on either occasion.. Ormskirk's strength showed early in the game but the Tarleton line held strong and some solid tackling, notably from Rory and Aidan tackling players twice their size, kept the visitors out.

The breakthrough came when an Ormskirk center ran a different line and he managed to find a gap. Ormskirk were ahead.. Tarleton rallied but still were unable to break free. Ormskirk scored again and were now 12 points up.

Orders from the coaches were to consolidate the defence and regain and keep possession till half time. This they did even with Nick off the field for treatment and, with no forwards replacements, Tarleton were forced to play a back in the pack.

With words of encouragement from Kev, Dave and Steve in their ears the lads took to the field in the second half believing they could turn the match around. Will Thompson and Ollie came off the bench and within 30 seconds Will had intercepted a pass and ran half the length of the field to score.

Tarleton's belief grew and they soon scored again through Will Booth. The conversion hit the post and Ormskirk held on to their lead. Ollie also came off the bench to score and even managed to run round the back to place it under the sticks for Aidan's conversion.

Tarleton were ahead for the first time and this truly was a game of two halves, Ormskirk's early dominance now being cancelled out by Tarleton. Changes were made on both sides and if anything the Ormskirk pack grew stronger winning the battles at mauls and driving Tarleton back into a dangerous position. Tarleton's reaction to this was simply to move the ball wide and keep it away from them.

The center combination of Will and Elliot worked well and Will got his second of the game, converted by Jake. Big Ryan came back on the field and the pack regained it's strength and , it would seem, pace! James "Speedzilla" Harrison showed great pace taking the ball forward and is improving week on week, I don't think we've had his best just yet. Dan Walton astounded us all too with his late pace, beating the backs to make the first tackle following a kick.

There were again so many players worthy of winning player of the match but 2 stood out for very different reasons, firstly Jordan for being such a good workhorse, he is like the engine room of our team and never stops running and tackling. Secondly, for whatever he said to lift the team in the dressing room before the match and for his lead by example attitude, Craig Bretherton.

More changes were made to Tarleton's line up and, in order to test the whole squad, two of Tarleton's three county players and the player of the match finished the game on the bench. Elliot put the game to bed late on with a mesmerizing run through a tired Ormskirk defence and this



# Tarleton Rugby Union Football Club

West Lancs derby finished 31 – 12 in Tarleton's favour. The two teams meet again next week and, as a result of this game, I am certain the scoreline will not be as convincing.

Tarleton showed today that their new found fitness levels (Thank-you Ben) will allow them to compete with sides with another full team of subs waiting on the bench. Thanks to Nick and the Ormskirk team for this last minute fixture and for the good spirit in which it was played and look forward to next week.

## **14 March 2010** **Sedgeley Park 7 Tarleton 37\***

Following last week's heartache at being knocked out of the Plate by Rochdale, Tarleton U15's needed to get back on winning ways.

They traveled to Sedgeley Park with their U16 counterparts who, through injuries, needed to borrow some players to make up their team. Jake, Will and Kieran very bravely volunteered to run out for the older age group against some huge opponents. This left the u15's with 16 players but Sedgeley park could only muster 10.

It was decided that the best course of action was for Tarleton to loan Sedgeley 3 players so that both games could be played with the 15's playing 13 a side. Dan P, Matt H and Theo played for Sedgeley and helped keep them in the game.

Teamwork between Ollie and Elliot opened up the scoring within a minute and after a few minutes more Elliot had Tarleton's 2nd. James M got the 3rd and with Aidan's conversion the score now stood at 0 – 19.

With only 6 forwards on each team they had to work much harder to get to the breakdowns but both sides handled it well, a testimony to just how fit these lads are. Jordan and James H seemed to relish in the increased space and put in great performances both in the breakdown and their running.

In the second half Craig led by example winning and securing plenty of ball and rallying his tired forwards to drive the mauls on. Players seemed to be really competing with each other to win player of the match.

Aidan, now back at his favoured Full Back position was reveling in his re-found confidence and seemed to be involved in every attack, Jacob overcame the difficult wind conditions to pass quick, precise ball to the backs, Stealing the show though was Dan W who raised his game immensely and even looked like scoring from his own half at one point, (not bad for a prop) after intercepting a loose pass.

The hard work of the forwards finally paid off for them when Jordan crashed over for a try. Will T was caught a few times trying to break down the wing after some sublime passing from Rory and George.

It was only a matter of time before they would break through and sure enough they did, a return pass from George to Rory sent the opposition the wrong way and a simple draw and pass from Elliot left Will only one to beat. Will stepped him with ease and ran round to the sticks for a try.

Sedgeley Park were not beat and never really became so giving all they could at every breakdown, the Hooker slipped a couple of tackles and given his size and pace was not going to be stopped, he went over under the sticks for a well deserved consolation try. With a full team effort Tarleton strung several phases together and soon had another try and conversion by Aidan followed shortly after by another, made by James H and scored by Theo.

Ryan must have thought he was in line for a rest when he was withdrawn with 10 minutes to go but he was wrong. Tarleton u16's had lost their prop through injury so he was needed elsewhere.



# Tarleton Rugby Union Football Club

Without a rest he went across closely followed by Dan P, Craig, James H, Elliot and James M.

At one point 6 U15's were on the field against Sedgely U16's. It takes real guts to step up an age group especially given the size of these lads and although the match was lost 19-12 the younger players played their part in this spirited comeback from 19-0 down.

## **7 February 2010** **Aldwinians 33 Tarleton 8**

Tarleton traveled to Aldwinians last week to face a team who were narrowly beaten in the final of last year's cup competition. Such is the strength of this team that they boast several county and presidents 15 players.

Despite being beaten by Aldwinians earlier this year Tarleton were eager to try to improve on their previous scoreline.

The opening 10 minutes were much better from Tarleton and they managed to hold the strong Aldwinians team until this point.

The solid defending that had kept the home side at bay gave way and the centre burst through to open the scoring. An early injury to the previous week's player of the match saw him leave the field after 15 minutes.

Play was quite evenly balanced but Aldwinians seemed the more determined, but for some amazing try saving tackles from Aidan Miller, the home side could have run away with this earlier. Eventually something had to give once more and Aldwinians extended their lead.

A stamping incident late in the first half threatened to spoil the good on field atmosphere but after a word from the team captains things very quickly settled down.

After the break Tarleton threatened more especially in the forwards and their break came when Ryan Ball was driven over for a try. Ryan were denied further points minutes later following a dubious penalty decision.

The Aldwinians pace was eventually too much for the visitors to contend with and a couple of tries in quick succession dampened Tarleton's enthusiasm somewhat. A penalty near the halfway line seemed unlikely to bring any relief for the scoreline but the boot of Jake Mann, who was having his best game of the season so far, provided 3 unlikely points.

Although Aldwinians were clearly the stronger side, the final score of 33 – 8 does no justice to the work put in by Tarleton.

On any other day many players could have won player of the match with Dan Procter, Kane Entwistle and Jake Mann all having great games but today's show was well and truly stolen by Aidan Miller who seems to have returned from his ski trip with new desire. Well done Aidan.

## **24 January 2010** **Tarleton 24 Manchester 10**

**Lancashire Cup** After so many missed matches due to the weather, both sides at Carr Lane were eager to get playing. Tarleton won this fixture last year by just one point so they were keen to repeat the victory in their first game of the decade. Manchester, however, had other ideas.

The game started with some tough exchanges and the ball passing between the teams frequently. Tarleton's backs were being tested and it required an excellent tackle from Jordan Bickerstaffe to stop them, albeit temporarily. The visitors tactics of kick and chase paid off for them when, on the 5 minute mark, they scored. The conversion was missed but they lead 5-0.



# Tarleton Rugby Union Football Club

Tarleton tried to rally and James Maguire went on a storming run handing off as he went. A high tackle stopped him but for this he was awarded a penalty. Every Tarleton attack was short lived with the visitors tactics getting them out of trouble time and time again.

Ollie Barham found himself right underneath one of the high balls and he stepped his way through half the field before being taken down. Rory Bramford worked as hard in attack as he did in defence giving George Evans-Jones a good supply which he used sensibly to ensure possession.

Every Manchester attack looked strong and, for a while, Tarleton were really up against it now and some very important tackles from James Harrison, Matthew Oshinowo and Nick Garden kept them within sight.

Somewhat against the run of play, Tarleton went on the attack, Jake Mann Chipped through to a sprinting Ryan Ball who levelled the Manchester defender before offloading back to Jake for the pass out wide. Rory was on the end of this and chipped once more, this time to James Maguire who dived over to level the score 5-5.

Manchester stuck with their tactics and had the home side running back to cover again. Ollie Barham came from nowhere to boot a loose ball into the grandstand. (well if we had one it would have) Tarleton were in disarray for a few minutes and exposed their own wing allowing Manchester an easy try out wide. Their lead now restored, Manchester looked like going on to win.

At times Tarleton were lacking a little pace and team understanding especially in defence but at least Craig and Jordan looked snug in their new tights they got from Santa. An inspirational team talk was required and this is exactly what Tarleton got from their coaches Dave and Steve.

Tarleton came out all guns blazing and straight away Captain Craig Bretherton scored only for it to be ruled out for being in touch. For a short spell Manchester stuck with their gameplan but Tarleton now had the measure of them partly down to the fresh legs coming on at the break. As Manchester somewhat inexplicably changed their gameplan Tarleton started to dominate.

Following a scrum in the opposition 22 Tarleton's scrum half and flanker, Dan Procter, charged the kick. Dan got there first and batted the ball down in front of Jake who reacted quickest to score the equaliser. Jake stood up and secured the two points and the lead 12 – 10.

With confidence growing and fitness showing, Tarleton never looked back from here. James Maguire ran virtually the length of the field to score again only for the ref not to witness the grounding. Ryan Ball was replaced by the ever improving Dan Walton and earned his hard earned break. It wasn't long though before he was called into action again as an inspired substitution brought him into the No 8 position. His sheer size allowed him to smash over twice more in the dying minutes one of which was converted. The final score 24 – 10 in favour of Tarleton.

Tarleton have struggled to find the form with which they finished last season but have made massive steps toward it in the later stages of this game.

Player of the match honours are shared this week between 2 forwards who, in very different ways, grabbed this game by the scruff and turned it around. This weeks players of the match were, unanimously, Ryan Ball and James Maguire.

**22 November 2009**  
**Tarleton 3 Aldwinians 31**

Tarleton U15s faced last year's cup runners up this week, in the latest stage of the Lancashire Cup Challenge. At home, and eager to keep their unbeaten run going they were really focused on their objectives.

Winning was always going to be difficult today against a class opposition and with several players



# Tarleton Rugby Union Football Club

missing. Tarleton U14's provided the back up with Tom Crowe, Ben Cromack and Frankie Skofic all playing their part in this epic match.

Aldwinians made the first move when they scored in the first minute. The home side rallied, as is their way, and provided a much stiffer defence. Some good kicking and pressure on the Aldwinians full back placed Tarleton within striking range. A penalty was awarded and Tarleton narrowed the gap to 2 points. Jake Mann scored the 3 points and Tarleton's self belief grew.

The game ebbed and flowed for a spell with both sides looking for the breakthrough. Rory Bramford, Kane Entwistle and Will booth made tackle after tackle in the midfield buying time for the forwards to get into support. Tarleton were increasingly desperate to hold on as Aldwinians seemed to grow in strength good tackling on the wings by Sean Baxter and Kieran Roufignac supported by full back Aidan Miller and great pressure at the breakdown especially from Dan Proctor and Craig Bretherton kept them at bay. Eventually the Aldwinian strength broke through and they stretched their lead to 10-3.

Pleased with their performance so far Tarleton had some belief they could take something from this game if only they could find a little extra effort. For 5 minutes they gave everything but when Aldwinians once again scored they looked a little deflated. Playing with heart and never ones to give up they went after the ball again.

Tarleton hardly faltered at line out and scrum with James Harrison and Nick Garden in the second row throwing themselves into harms way to win the ball. Strong rucking from George Evans-Jones and Jordan Bickerstaffe won the home side plenty of ball but the Aldwinians defence was strong and all attempts to break through failed. Will Thompson was put into space on the left but from nowhere one of the visitors slammed him into touch. Each time Tarleton applied pressure the visitors managed to kick clear. A scrappy ball was picked up and Matthew Oshinowo exploited the situation by running around 30m before being stopped.

Aldwinians scored twice more and, unlike the first half, converted as well, their last try being the pick of the bunch with the centre running a lovely inside line through the defence. The game was now gone but Tarleton still refused to yield and if anything, raised their game even further. Jacob Forshaw came on to scrum half and controlled the game well as Tarleton set up camp on the opposition 5 m line.

For the last 5 minutes only one team looked like scoring in fact Tarleton grounded the ball over the try line 3 times only for the decision to be "held up" each time. The final whistle came and both teams showed their respect for each other after such a good game. Aldwinians won 31 - 3 but the score does not do Tarleton the credit they deserve, they have played better this year but never with so much grit and determination. One player raised his game significantly today and played with the heart of a lion. For this effort Rory Bramford is this week's player of the match.

Tarleton have now been beaten for the first time this season, more lessons are learnt in defeat than in victory and I'm sure they will become stronger as a result of this game.

## **15 November 2009 Tarleton 30\* Fleetwood 0**

At short notice Fleetwood very kindly agreed to travel to Tarleton for this weeks match. Both sides were severely depleted due to illness and injury and could only muster 16 players each. Tarleton, keen to retain their current unbeaten run of games, started brightly and scored through Will Booth inside the first few minutes Jake Mann duly converted and from here Tarleton never really looked back.

Matty Oshinowo got the second soon after and it was quite clear this was going to be a good Tarleton performance. Quick passing meant ground was made with every move and with Kieran Roufignac in top form the Fleetwood defence was well tested on their right. On th 10th minute the next breakthrough came as Will got his second.



# Tarleton Rugby Union Football Club

A few minutes of lapsed concentration allowed Fleetwood a route back into the game, a few bad decisions coupled with several forward passes allowed them some possession and some territory. The Tarleton defence held strong even if it was on their 5m line and when Fleetwood threatened the Tarleton wing Jacob Forshaw was there to stop them.

The Tarleton Forwards worked tirelessly as always to win ball for the backs to run with, James Harrison was flawless, catching the high balls and taking the game to Fleetwood, sometimes the forwards ran it themselves and with excellent support added two more through Ryan Ball and James Maguire. Aidan Miller and James both converted and tarleton were now flying.

Right on the stroke of the half Matty added another to the delight of the home crowd. In the second half Kieran looked to have scored the try of the match running from near the half way, shrugging off tackles, to score under the sticks. The final pass however was deemed forwards but Kieran was applauded anyway for his efforts. Tarleton continued to frustrate Fleetwood with big tackles, turn overs and lots of possession.

Further tries from Ryan McGillivray (2) and (Captain) Craig Bretherton gave Tarleton an unassailable lead.

This report probably doesn't do justice to Fleetwood and they should take heart from the fact they have caught Tarleton playing at their very best.

With big cup games coming up Tarleton have hit form just at the right time, with the players due to return they should take some stopping.

Congratulations go to Kevan and Dave for preparing the lads for this weeks and last week's game in my absence, cracking job!

The last 2 matches have been such good team efforts it has been impossible to decide on player of the match and unlike Simon Cowell we don't have the luxury of a public vote. ( perhaps that's an idea for the future)

**8 November 2009**  
**Tarleton 22 Rossendale 17**

**Report by John Bridge of Rossendale RUFC** One of those times where a deep breath is needed and to take a step back and review it all.

Now I've done that I would just like to say how proud we are of the performance today from your commitment and desire, from the way you took the game to the opposition and for the way in which you raised your levels of play to the standard that Tarleton play at.

This was a joy to watch and one which the opposition coaches, referee, parents and players have all remarked upon as being probably the most entertaining game of the season for them and certainly had them on the back foot until the final whistle.

Echoed by our supporters and coaches as being one of the best performances ( if not the finest) the team have been involved in. Accolades from every quarter and to be honest one which when we look back slipped the net from a victory from us. Not to dwell on that Dave and I walked off with our heads held high and so should everyone that played today, superb.

The game started with Rossendale being dominate and the home side unable to break from their own half in the first 15. Both sides cancelled each other out but several minutes of fatigue around the 20 minute mark saw the home side take the lead with the first try.

The Dale lads pushed back with a superb taken ball from the kick off by Joe Andrews who drove the ball back into the opposition 20. Game on and the Dale lads continued to battle to even the



# Tarleton Rugby Union Football Club

scores. Harry Clark was the man to do it with a fantastic push towards their line beating several defenders with great determination , even side stepping the posts to score to provide Sam Bedlow with an easy conversation.) A further score took the tally to 10-7 to the home side just before half time.

Into the second half and the Dale lads then continued to push on and battled bravely to win a penalty which Sam Bedlow duly popped over to level the game.

Now there are more ways to skin a cat and Sam Lowthion duly did that from the restart when a passing movement from across the field ended up in his hands, he drove wide and kicked the legs before stripping the defence of all their dignity and ran some 60 metres beating all in his midst before putting the ball down under the sticks to make an easy conversation again for Sam B. Rossendale took the lead 17-10.

Again the match went into a stalemate, not short of excitement but great play in attack and defence cancelling each other out and both sides playing their parts in an even matched contest. Ben Clough continued to probe the defence with strong run after run and deserved a score but good tackling prevented him from breaking through the final line.

Eventually the home side took opportunity to barge through the blind side and score from a scrum 20 yards out which again levelled the scores. 17-17 and all to play for.

An injury hit the Dale lads and a bit of confusion in resulting changes led to a little indecision which led to the final and winning try by Tarleton in the far corner on around 55 minutes.

The final 5 minutes were a nerve racking experience for both sides and supporters as the Dale lads battled bravely to come back and turn the game back in their favour but it was not to be. Final score 22-17 reverse but one which we will always take heart upon and can look back with great pride.

It was a very difficult choice to name a single man of the match with such a great team performance and we plumped for 4 in the end - Sam Bedlow ( Captain courageous) Sam Lowthion , Joe Andrews and Harry Clark. All equally deserving of the accolade as well as the team as a whole. Kieron McEwan took the improving player award for yet another developing display.

A mention to the referee who had a great game ( hopefully this will secure a few more hours overtime for me next week).He let the game flow but pulled up where necessary and was very consistent and honest in his decisions.

Well Done Rossendale, a superb team effort.

*I would just like to thank John and the Rossendale team for coming over for this fixture. unfortunately I missed it but by all accounts it was a cracker. Thanks also to Greg Carlton for officiating. Steve Mann*

**25 October 2009**  
**Tarleton 15 Leigh 0**

Tarleton's loyal followers were this week treated to a 30 minute re-enactment of the epic battle scene from the film 300. After this time, and without warning, a game of rugby broke out. Round one, ding ding .....

Tarleton took the ball to Leigh time after time, with Matt Oshinowo and Craig Bretherton leading from the front and testing their line. Most of the first half was played in Leigh's half, but with good use of the boot following Tarleton errors, they made it difficult to get through. Before long the game became very disjointed with the ref having to stop the game every minute to sort out a scrap somewhere on the field.



# Tarleton Rugby Union Football Club

Half time. (Given the amount of fights that were occurring during the game both coaches took their teams away and informed them that any further incidents would not be tolerated.)

Second Half. With their coach's voices ringing in their ears, both sides took to the field and this time they wanted to play rugby. It was now Tarleton's change to utilise the wind to their advantage, the difference was Tarleton used the kick to attack rather than defence. Pressure from the first high kick forced Leigh to kick the ball back to them. A good take from Ollie Barham set him off on his way, from this attack Tarleton piled on the pressure and after testing the strong Leigh defence a number of times, Kane Entwistle broke free to score the first points of the game.

Tarleton's half back combination forced more pressure on Leigh by kicking over the top towards the wing. Tarleton turned the ball over and on one of the few occasions the ball came out wide, George Evans-Jones released Ollie Barham to score. Tarleton's wingers were getting more and more frustrated as they have received very little ball throughout the game. Sean Baxter's persistence paid off when he was given the ball and he stepped and spun himself passed at least five players.

The battle for every inch of ground continued with the forwards, this pressure paid off when James Harrison was able to charge over for Tarleton's third try. The ball moved more freely at this stage of the game and once again Sean got it out wide and went on a marauding run through the Leigh defence. The ball came back in field and Jordan Bickerstaffe dived over to score under the sticks. Unfortunately for him his grip on the ball released just before the grounding. Tarleton are now unbeaten in their last 10 games and while this wasn't their best performance by any means, they did enough to win. This week's player of the match is Sean Baxter. Sean didn't often get the ball today but in the time he had it he did so much with it. Sean was also extremely strong in defence when called upon.

**18 October 2009**  
**Tyldesley 0 Tarleton 30\***

Tarleton traveled to Tyldesley this week aiming to maintain their unbeaten run and as the scoreline shows they didn't disappoint. With 5 regular players missing the away side only had 17 available but such is the strength in depth of this squad they were not concerned.

With last week's win over Waterloo fresh in their minds, confidence was high especially in last week's player of the match Ryan Ball. Ryan started the match where he had left off last week by scoring in the first couple of minutes. A lovely passing move from right to left created the space out wide for Kieran Rouffignac to extend the lead.

Further tries from Will Booth, James Maguire, Matt Oshinowo and Tarleton's most recent acquisition, Dan Walton, put the game out of Tyldesley's reach. But it was the jinking run from scrum half Jacob Forshaw that stole the show bursting through the Tyldesley line to score then following up with the conversion. This flash of inspiration has earned Jacob this week's player of the match award.

With some further success with the boot Tarleton were able to extend their lead even further. All credit to Tyldesley for a very fair game and for not being disheartened with the final score – keep it up lads.

**11 October 2009**  
**Tarleton 27 Waterloo 17**

Within the first few minutes of the game, Tarleton were fired up and a fantastic try was scored by Will Booth and then converted by Aidan Miller. Waterloo made their comeback, scored and successfully converted. Will Booth scored the second try, passed from Kieran Rouffignac, but unfortunately wasn't converted.

Waterloo making great effort to keep Tarleton tense and making it difficult for Tarleton to score,



# Tarleton Rugby Union Football Club

but with Ryan Ball fighting through we had scored again and was converted by Jake Mann, making the score 19-10 to Tarleton. Both the forwards and backs held up a great team to keep Waterloo from scoring. One penalty was given to Tarleton kicked by Jake Mann and successfully done. Waterloo then came back with one more try, but with Tarleton determined to get another try, Ryan Ball battled through again, with the team behind him all the way, he scored but was unfortunately wasn't converted. Then Waterloo made another try which wasn't converted making the final score 27-17 to Tarleton.

Every team member played extremely well, on both sides, with great tackles, a great defence and attacking team from Tarleton.

## **20 September 2009** **Tarleton 25 Blackburn 19**

Tarleton Under 15s got this season off to a good start today against their old adversaries, Blackburn. It's always a pleasure to welcome this team over and today was no exception.

Blackburn started quickest and within the first minute had run in a try and converted. This was the spark needed by Tarleton and they soon set about repairing the damage. This they did and soon got into their stride with 2 tries by Will Booth and a drop goal, Tries also from Aiden Millar and Craig Bretherton and a conversion by Jake Mann giving them a seemingly unassailable lead. .

The players are bigger now and the hits are harder and as a consequence the Tarleton squad suffered several injuries including a horrendous cut and swollen eye for Rory Bramford. (remember Rory, chicks dig a scar) Players were forced into different positions and Blackburn found some form scoring twice more and converting once. .

With the seconds ticking down this game could have gone either way but Tarleton just held on to secure the victory.

Player of the match: Craig Bretherton.



# Tarleton Rugby Union Football Club

## Under 14s

**7 March 2010**

**Tarleton 29 Leigh 15**

**Lancashire Cup** This important Lancashire Cup fixture at Leigh saw Tarleton struggling for players, No Rossie, Declan, Rob or Fraz, but sixteen players turned up to take on the Leigh side.

A good start for a change with a scrum leading to a Tom run to the half way, then first Frank then Ben and on to Cam for the first try after only two minutes. Conversion Cam 7-0.

In the eighth minute another try for Tarleton, a kick by Leigh saw a run by Sean and Tom and then a quick tap by Frank which led to Tarleton's second try. Conversion Cam. 14 – 0.

In the eleventh minute, a turn over by Tom, Ben run and then a good run by Dan who was tackled into touch. Then a period of pressure by Leigh in the Tarleton twenty two resulted in a Leigh try on fourteen minutes after a lineout. Conversion successful. 14 –7.

At the kick off a Leigh kick led to a run by Sean, but a resulting Leigh Penalty was missed. On nineteen minutes Leigh hit back again with an unconverted try in the corner. 14 – 12.

This galvanized Tarleton into action and after a Frank run in to the Leigh half Leigh were offside and the resulting kick was converted by Cam to leave the score at 17 – 12 at Half time. HALF TIME

It had been a good start to the half for a change and some good play, but lack of concentration let Leigh back into the game. The match was still in the balance with only one try in it.

Again the half started well with a penalty which was missed by Cam but in the resulting play a Tarleton turnover and kick by John led to a try by Cam. Conversion missed. 22 – 12.

After this, a period of Leigh pressure on the Tarleton line led to a penalty to Leigh which was converted leaving the score at 22 – 15. Over the next few minutes Tarleton began to exert pressure on the Leigh line and after a Tarleton penalty was awarded, Tom ran in Tarleton's fourth try of the match. Conversion Cam. 29 – 15.

Leigh again tried to get themselves back into the match but the Tarleton defence was up to it. In the sixteenth minute a good move involving John, Frank, Ben and James just failed to deliver the killer try. A series of scrums and lineouts dominated the next ten minutes but ending with a good run by Dan who unfortunately stepped in touch.

FINAL THOUGHTS - A deserved win to put the Tarleton boys into the semi-finals. A good second half kept pressure on and was enough to beat a spirited Leigh side. A tough semi-final now awaits against Fleetwood.

**11 October 2009**

**Tarleton 0 Waterloo 19**

**Lancashire Cup** The match kicked off at 11 am on a windy day after a heavy rainstorm which meant that the pitch was greasy. For the first four minutes a series of scrums and lineouts led to a kick to touch by Frankie. From the resulting lineout pressure by Waterloo led to the first try of the game when some missed tackles down the wing led to an easy score. The conversion was scored 7-0 to Waterloo after 7 minutes.

There followed more pressure from Waterloo in the Tarleton 22 and for the next 8 minutes more scrums, until in the 15th minute Frankie Scovic was injured and had to come off. This led to a



# Tarleton Rugby Union Football Club

reshuffle as Callum went to scum half and John to stand off.

Still there was no respite from Waterloo pressure but poor handling by the Waterloo backs prevented any further scoring in the first half. HALF TIME – Tarleton 0 Waterloo 7.

Right through the half Tarleton were on the back foot, almost all the rugby was played in the Tarleton half of the field and the fact that the strong wind was in their faces was not an excuse. It could have been worse if the opposition handling had been better.

The second half started well with a good move along the line and a good run by Sean, but the play remained in the centre of the field with neither side able to exert any pressure. In the 8th minute a Tarleton penalty on half way was dropped, the ball was kicked on by Waterloo and no one on the Tarleton side could manage to drop on the ball until it was over the try line and a Waterloo player scored. Conversion successful, 14-0 to Waterloo.

Over the next 6 minutes some possession came Tarleton's way in the Waterloo half, but despite a good run from Silky it was again Waterloo who applied pressure down Tarleton's right flank and forced their way over the line for a third try. Conversion missed, 19-0 to Waterloo on 14 minutes.

Again the game descended into a series of scrums and lineouts mostly in the Waterloo half but not near enough to threaten the Waterloo line. On 20 minutes Waterloo had a penalty straight in front of the posts which they thankfully missed and the game ended with Tarleton pressure in the Waterloo half, but it never looked likely that they would score. FULL TIME Tarleton 0 Waterloo 19

FINAL THOUGHTS – It was a hard fought game but some basic mistakes and handling errors from both sides led to a disjointed, stop-start game which saw twenty five scrums, fifteen lineouts and fourteen penalties being awarded. A better performance than Ormskirk but still some things to work on for next match.

## **26 September 2009** **Tarleton 0 Ormskirk 27**

**Lancashire Cup** The match began well enough with Tarleton having pressure in the Ormskirk half, good runs by Frankie and Tom put us into Ormskirk territory. After some possession by Ormskirk in the Tarleton half, Tarleton enjoyed a period of possession in the Ormskirk half but in the 13th minute Tarleton lost their own lineout which led to pressure from Ormskirk on the Tarleton line, resulting in the first try for Ormskirk in the 16th minute. The conversion was successful and so the score moved to 7-0.

Again, Tarleton were the architects of their own downfall when they dropped the ball in their own half which led to pressure again by Ormskirk and a break in the 22nd minute led to the second Ormskirk try. Conversion missed. 12-0.

In the 23rd and 24th minutes Tarleton lost two lineouts in their own 22 and this invited pressure from Ormskirk again, also two penalties, one for Ormskirk and one for Tarleton, followed by mauls that neither side could capitalize on.

HALF TIME: Tarleton 0 Ormskirk 12 Although Tarleton were down by twelve points there was still hope that they could up their game and turn it around in the second half.

The half started badly as after 2 minutes Ormskirk scored their third try after Tarleton had dropped the ball in their own half. Conversion missed 17-0. Tarleton reacted with a period of pressure in the Ormskirk half but did not get near to scoring a try, then after concerted Ormskirk pressure they scored again in the 7th minute. Conversion missed. 22-0.

Tarleton were now beginning to wilt under Ormskirk's sustained pressure and in the 11th minute after a kick from a Tarleton scrum, Ormskirk ran the ball back at the Tarleton defence which was breached for the fifth time. Conversion missed. 27-0.



# Tarleton Rugby Union Football Club

The rest of the half saw Tarleton fighting a rearguard action against mounting Ormskirk pressure, but they refused to give in and the game finished 27-0, it could have been worse! FULL TIME:  
Tarleton 0 Ormskirk 27

FINAL WORDS – This was not the start the under 14's were looking for in the cup, they competed well for the first 15 minutes up until Ormskirk's first try and then they seemed to lose belief and struggled to do the basics. There were too many lost scrums, lost line outs, missed tackles and dropped ball to have a chance of winning this encounter. There is a lot of work to be done on the training field before the next match!



# Tarleton Rugby Union Football Club

## Under 13s

**11 October 2009**

**Fleetwood 29 Tarleton 5**

This was a very hard working display put on by Tarleton. They went a try down and the team worked hard to get one back, the try being scored by Jake Abram.

Fleetwood went on to score and convert in the first half. The score was 12-5 at half time. With a mixture of bad decisions and inexperience Tarleton went further behind. The result was not a true reflection of the game as Tarleton had a large proportion of the possession during the game. Well done to all, keep up the hard work.

**4 October 2009**

**Blackburn 24 Tarleton 22**

Blackburn scored first in this good and close encounter, following this on with a good conversion. Tarleton hit back with a Callum Roscoe try in the corner. Blackburn then scored 3 tries but only managed to convert one of these.

Tarleton being 17 points behind now started to play. There were 3 Jack Nolan tries, 2 in the corner and one under the posts. They got one conversion kicked by Shaun Bretherton.

It was a well fought game over all but tackling must be improved to prevent tries by the opposition. Well done all.



# Tarleton Rugby Union Football Club

## Under 12s

### **18 April 2010 Preston Grasshoppers Festival**

Tarleton under 12s travelled the short distance to Preston with a team of just thirteen players having lost players to Easter attractions and volcanic ash.

Tarleton's opening game was against Ormskirk. Tarleton spent the whole of the first half attacking the Ormskirk line but despite many close attempts were unable to achieve a score. The second half continued in the same vein with Tarleton pressurising the opposition line. Despite some close attempts from Harry Atkinson, Matt Stevenson and James Byrom the Ormskirk line held firm.

The game was still scoreless when the referee called last play and awarded Tarleton a scrum five metres out from the Ormskirk try line. Conor Whelan gathered the ball from the base of the scrum; he passed the ball out to James Jeffers. James caught the ball and ran out wide around the Ormskirk and scored in the corner to secure the narrowest of wins.

Game two saw Tarleton facing Blackburn; the prize for the winners would be a place in the semi-finals. Tarleton started off the game playing some good rugby which saw them score two well worked tries in the first half. The try scorers were James Jeffers and Harry Atkinson.

The second half began and Tarleton were seven minutes away from a semi-final. Inexplicably within five minutes Blackburn had scored two tries and the game was level. Blackburn were now in the ascendancy and went on to score a third try and with it clinch the semi-final place. Tarleton were left wondering what should have been! The final game was against tournament hosts and local rivals Preston. Tarleton never got started in this game and Preston ran out comfortable winners.

### **11 April 2010 Southport 7 Tarleton 0 Liverpool St Helens 12 Tarleton 14**

This was a triangular fixture at Waterloo Road Southport.

Tarleton's try scorers in the Liverpool St Helens match were; Conor Whelan who broke from the base of a scrum to score a fine solo try. The second try was scored by Harry Atkinson who crashed through the LSH defence to score. Both tries were converted by Joe Wignall.

### **28 March 2010 Collegiate 21 Tarleton 0 Ormskirk 7 Tarleton 7**

The start of British Summertime saw Tarleton Under 12s making the short trip to Ormskirk for a triangular fixture with Ormskirk and Collegiate.

The first game was against a well drilled and organised Collegiate team whose forwards showed a good display of the rucking art and their backs ran and passed the ball at pace. From the start Tarleton found themselves on the back foot and by half time they trailed by twenty-one points to nil. In the second half Tarleton showed more resilience and through improved tackling managed to prevent Collegiate scoring again. Tarleton's top tacklers were the two Connors who led by example tackling who ever appeared in front of them.

The second game was against hosts, and local rivals, Ormskirk. Ormskirk began the game with great commitment attacking the Tarleton line. Tarleton were the first to score, a little against the run of play, James Holden cleared the ball down field and chased his own kick. He managed to



# Tarleton Rugby Union Football Club

tackle the Ormskirk player who had collected the ball; he then off loaded the ball to Joe Wignall. Joe was about ten yards short of the line but managed to make his way to the line to score the try. He then picked himself up and converted the try to put Tarleton seven points to nil in front at the half time whistle.

In the second half Tarleton defended heroically until with five minutes left they were awarded a scrum midway inside their own half. Conor put the ball into the scrum; Tarleton hooked the ball but unfortunately Ormskirk drove Tarleton off the ball and won the scrum. Ormskirk ran the ball through their backs and despite many attempted tackles they made it to the line to score. The try was converted and the match was tied at seven points each.

## **14 March 2010** **Vale of Lune Festival**

Tarleton under 12s travelled north to Lancaster with a team of just thirteen players having lost nine players to sickness or Mothers Day commitments. Not a big squad for what is traditionally one of the strongest festivals. This year did not disappoint with clubs coming from all over the north of England and as far away as Carlisle, Doncaster, Macclesfield, and Skipton.

Tarleton's opening game was against Waterloo; unfortunately after a good start keeping Waterloo off the score sheet for the first quarter of the match a few silly mistakes gave Waterloo some easy tries. This allowed Waterloo to grow in confidence and they ran out comfortable winners.

Game two saw Tarleton facing Widnes. There was not much between the two sides except that Widnes took their chances and scored their tries; Tarleton did not take theirs! On a couple of occasions Tarleton worked the ball to the Widnes try line but were unable to ground the ball.

The final game was against local rivals Southport. Tarleton began this match with full commitment and took the play to Southport for the whole of the first half but the Southport defence held firm. Half time came and the sides were level; the game was scoreless.

In the second half Tarleton's relentless attacking finally saw them achieve a score. Joe Cocker collected the ball from a maul and weaved his way through the Southport defence to score a lovely try. Then from the last play of the game Harry Atkinson received the ball from a line out and crashed over the line to score Tarleton's second try. The referee blew for time and Tarleton had won ten points to nil.

## **28 February 2010** **Aldwinians 14 Tarleton 7** **Fleetwood 28 Tarleton 12**

**Barclays Cup** This was round three of the Barclays Cup and it was Fleetwood's turn to host this round of the competition. The pitches at the club were waterlogged so the fixture was moved to the nautical College sports pitches. Tarleton were in good spirits but low on numbers, travelling with only fourteen players.

Tarletons opening game was against Aldwinians; with a little more commitment and concentration Tarleton could have got at least a draw. Tarleton's try was scored by Conor Whelan when he collected the ball from a line out and ran threw the entire Aldwinians back line to score a good solo try. The try was converted by Joe Wignall.

The second match was against a large Fleetwood team. For most of the game Tarleton acquitted themselves very well; but once again they failed remain focussed for the entire match and paid the penalty with another defeat against opposition that they are capable of beating. Tarletons try were scored by Jack Marsh and Joe Wignall; Joe converted one of the tries.



# Tarleton Rugby Union Football Club

## **21 February 2010** **Tarleton 14 Fleetwood 14**

Due to overnight snow the match was in doubt for several hours; Fleetwood were unsure about making the trip but in the end they decided travel and so the game was on.

The match began with a light covering of snow on the ground and for once Tarleton started the match with great determination taking the play to the large Fleetwood outfit. Within the first few minutes Tarleton were pressurising their opponent's line. The ball was passed through the backs and out to James Jeffers on the wing; James passed the ball back inside and Michael Taylor shot through the remains of the Fleetwood defence to score the opening try. James Jeffers slotted the conversion and Tarleton led seven nil.

Fleetwood hit back to score two tries of their own; both converted, to put Tarleton seven points behind in the match.

It was not long before Tarleton hit back with an equalising score. Tarleton were awarded a line out approx 10 metres out. Matt Cocker threw a great ball in; Harry Atkinson caught the ball with two hands. He turned and drove to the try line crashing over to claim a great individual try. James Jeffers completed the conversion to tie the match at fourteen points each.

## **14 February 2010** **Sefton 7 Tarleton 28**

Five minutes played and Tarleton were trailing by seven points. From their first attack Sefton's forwards had worked the ball down the pitch and claimed an easy try which they proceeded to convert. Game on! This proved to be the wake up call that Tarleton needed.

From the restart Tarleton showed much more commitment and started to drive Sefton back. The forwards were hitting the mauls and rucks with great purpose and moving the opposition back at every opportunity. From a maul midway inside the Sefton half James Byrom drove the ball to the opposition line where he fed the ball to James Jeffers. With the rest of the forwards joining in the ball was driven over the try line; James attempted to get the ball to the floor with the assistance of Joe Wignall and James Holden. Eventually James grounded the ball to claim the try. James then completed the conversion to tie the match at seven all.

Tarleton continued to ask questions of the home sides defence and were once again pressurising the try line when Sefton infringed at a ruck five yards out. Conor Whelan took a quick tap penalty and dashed over the line to score a typical scrum half's try. Once again James Jeffers was successful with the conversion. Half time and Tarleton led fourteen points to seven.

Sefton kicked off the second half and Tarleton drove the ball forward forcing the ball deep into the opposition half. The forwards led by Jack Marsh, George Sylvester and James Byrom were bossing the play in all areas of the pitch. This meant Tarleton were getting loads of possession. This allowed Harry Forshaw, James Stockwyn (playing his best rugby for weeks), and James Holden to play some lovely passing rugby. Whilst both wingers James Jeffers and Miles Eaglestone were both being brought into the play on a regular basis; Miles produced a couple of notable runs through the opposition defence.

Eventually the pressure cracked open the Sefton defence once again; Conor Whelan peeled off from a maul near the try line. He passed the ball to Joe Wignall who ran forward then spun over to claim Tarleton's third try. Joe then completed the conversion to move the total on to twenty-one points.

Tarleton continued to move the ball around the pitch with the forwards producing one of their best performances. It must be said though that Sefton stuck at their task and put in some big tackles and determined play of their own. Matt Cocker had one of his best games of the season; his line-



# Tarleton Rugby Union Football Club

out throwing and hooking were much improved. Declan Stewart and Jack Eckersley worked tirelessly for the good of the team.

The final try of the match went to James Jeffers when he capitalised on some fine team play down the right wing. The ball found its way to James just short of the line and he dived forwards and managed to ground the ball on the try line. James went on to convert the try to make the final score twenty-eight points to seven.

On top of the four tries there were also two disallowed tries. The first of these had seen the forwards drive the ball over the line on a couple of occasions. At the third attempt Tarleton were convinced they had scored; but the referee awarded a scrum because he was unsighted. The second disallowed try would have given James Jeffers his hat trick as he rounded off a great passing move by the backs to score in the corner only for the referee to bring them back for a forward pass.

Big thanks go to Sefton for being excellent hosts and playing the match with fantastic spirit, commitment and sportsmanship.

This was an excellent team display with every boy playing his part for the good of the team. The forwards worked hard and won loads of possession; whilst the backs ran the ball and used the space to make in roads all over the pitch. The thing to do now is to build on today's performance!

## 7 February 2010 Tyldesley 24 Tarleton 7

"Mama said there'll be days like this" (Shirelles). Sunday's match at Tyldesley is one that is best forgotten; a poor performance on a very narrow pitch I think best sums up the morning.

A big vote of thanks goes to Josh Lane, James Stockwyn and James Holden who volunteered to play for Tyldesley.

Best moment of the match was Harry Atkinson's thunderous tackle on one of the home side's players. Harry lined him up from about five yards away flew at the middle of the player drove him into the ground knocking the wind and ball out of the player. Harry then managed to collect the ball and make his way to the try line. Several Tarleton players crashed over the try line with him; Harry was bottom of the pile and claimed the try. The try was converted by Joe Wignall.

I think that's enough said about Sunday morning at Tyldesley.

## 24 January 2010 Tarleton 21 Sefton 21

After sixty minutes of committed rugby with neither side taking a backwards step it was impossible to split these teams. Both sides gave 100% commitment with some crushing tackles and fierce forward play being the order of the day. On three occasions Sefton took the lead with well worked tries, each one being converted, on every occasion Tarleton fought back to equalise. Tarleton's scorers are listed below;

**George Sylvester and Conor Whelan** – they broke off the side of a maul about five metres short of the opposition try line. Despite attempts by several defenders to halt their progress they managed to get over the line and ground the ball with several Sefton defenders on top of them. It was impossible to split the award of the try as they both claimed the score!

**Harry Atkinson** – Tarleton were awarded a penalty about seven yards out from the Sefton line. Conor took a tap start and the ball was fed to Harry Atkinson who drove over the line despite the attempts of several tacklers to claim a great individual score.



# Tarleton Rugby Union Football Club

**Harry Atkinson and Conor Whelan** – this try was very similar to the first try. Harry and Conor broke out of a maul close to the opposition try line and peeled over the line To claim the final try of the day.

**Joe Wignall** – Joe converted all three of Tarleton' tries.

**17 January 2010**

**Tarleton 0 Vale of Lune 21**

**Tarleton 35 Bury 0**

**Barclays Cup** This was round two of the Barclays Cup and it was Tarleton's turn to host this round of the competition. The pitches were in excellent condition despite all the rain, snow and ice that they have endured over the last seven weeks; the under 12s last match being in mid November at Wilmslow!

Tarletons first game was against a large and well drilled Vale of Lune team. Unfortunately for the first half this game Tarleton had left their rugby skills at home or even in Cheshire! Vale carved out three tries in the first ten minutes partly due to some sloppy play and poor handling from the home side. After a half time pep talk and a few substitutions the second half was a much more even contest. Vale did most of the attacking but Tarleton worked hard and prevented Vale from adding to their half time total of twenty one points. If only Tarleton had started the game with more commitment and better focus!

The second match was against Bury; fortunately Tarleton were now focussed and began this match with greater desire and commitment. They were rewarded with an emphatic victory and they also showed several good passages of running rugby with the ball being passed along the line. The try scorers are listed below;

**Joe Cocker** – Tarleton won the ball from a scrum about ten yards out. Conor passed the ball to Joe, who had come in off his wing; he then stepped through a couple of tackles to claim the opening try.

**Jack Marsh** – Jack collected the ball in his own half and ran through virtually the entire Bury team, breaking tackle after tackle to claim an excellent individual try.

**Harry Atkinson** – Tarleton won the ball from a maul midway inside the Bury half. Harry Atkinson collected the ball and ran through the Bury defence twisting out of several attempted tackles before crashing over the line to claim the third try.

**Jack Eckersley** – Tarleton worked the ball across the field through several sets of hands. Jack somehow appeared on the right wing and gratefully received the ball about twenty yards from the line. He tucked it under his arm, pinned back his ears and galloped to the line brushing off would be tacklers to claim try number four.

**Michael Taylor** – Michael's try, on his debut appearance, came from the best handling move of the match. The ball was passed at pace through over half a dozen pairs of hands, as players drew their man and offloaded the ball (it was just like we practiced in training). At the end of the chain was Michael who used his speed to scorch to the line.

**James Jeffers**- James did not score a try today but he did produce a faultless display of kicking to convert all five tries.

**22 November 2009**

**Wilmslow 12 Tarleton 7**

It was a very wet journey south down the M6 with lots of anxious phone calls wondering if the match would take place. On arrival at Wilmslow the intended pitch was not available but a



# Tarleton Rugby Union Football Club

replacement pitch was available. This meant a late start time and playing across a pitch which must have had a 1 in 6 slope from top to bottom.

Tarleton began the match kicking the ball up the slope deep into Wilmslow territory. The early part of the match developed into a series of rucks and mauls. When the ball did see some air the home side played some neat passing play. When Tarleton got the ball into space they proceeded to run back into the middle or attempted to play one-man rugby. I do not think either winger touched the ball!

Once again Tarleton had plenty of replacements on the side lines and after ten minutes all four were brought on to freshen things up. This seemed to lift Wilmslow and they drove down the field to put pressure on the Tarleton line. Despite winning the ball from a line out five yards from their own try line Tarleton failed to clear the ball. The ball was knocked forward and a Wilmslow player picked up the loose ball. The ball was passed through several pairs of hands before being touched down for the opening try of the morning; this was converted and meant Tarleton trailed by seven points to nil.

Tarleton's try came from the last play of the first half. They were awarded scrum about twelve yards out. From the scrum the ball was fed to Joseph Wignall who passed to James Jeffers. James ran at the heart of the Wilmslow defence and broke through a couple of tackles and touched down for a neat try. He then kicked the conversion and the half time score was seven each.

The second half began with Tarleton playing down the slope but Wilmslow gained the upper hand and for most of the half they were camped in the Tarleton half of the pitch. Eventually the pressure exerted by Wilmslow resulted in a try; the conversion was missed but Tarleton trailed by five points.

Tarleton continued to work hard battling for the ball and putting in numerous tackles. Players that stood out for their work rate were Conor Whelan, Jack Marsh, George Sylvester, Harry Forshaw and Declan Stewart. As the game wore on and the clock ticked down Tarleton had a couple of chances to score but unfortunately due to poor decision making they were unable to turn these opportunities into tries.

Despite the effort put in the final result was disappointing. This was a match that Tarleton should and could have won. Throughout the match there was space on the flanks but the ball was not passed out to the wings. If Tarleton under 12s are to compete with the best teams there needs to be more focus on team play and the ball needs to be passed to players who are in the best positions to score the tries.

## **15 November 2009 Tarleton 19 Sefton 7**

It was a bright sunny morning as the under 12s lined up for their second home game in succession. The pitch was surprisingly firm considering the amount of rain that had fallen over the last few days.

Tarleton began the match at a high tempo and forced the visitors onto defence from the kick off. They were asking big questions of the opposition defence with probing runs from the forwards; Jack Marsh, Harry Atkinson Declan Stewart and Alex Massey were producing some excellent bursts.

Tarleton had the luxury of five replacements on the side lines and after ten minutes they brought them all on which freshened up the starting line-up and brought on some fresh legs. This injection of energy gave Tarleton the added impetus they needed and from a ruck close to the Sefton try line George Sylvester, one of the replacements, worked the ball free. He still had plenty of work to do as there were several Sefton players trying to block his way to the line. Undaunted George dragged two tacklers with him and crashed over the line to claim the first try of the match. This was converted by James Jeffers. For all their good play Tarleton were unable to turn their territorial advantage and possession into scores. The half time whistle followed shortly after, so Tarleton



# Tarleton Rugby Union Football Club

went in at half time leading by seven points to nil and once again shuffled the team.

The second half began with Tarleton again playing some good passing rugby and enjoying long periods of possession in their opponents half. The ball was being moved along the back line and there were some good breaks from Jack Eckersley, Joe Wignall, Connor Whelan and James Stockwyn but for some reason Tarleton were unable to capitalise on these to score tries.

Tarleton's pressure finally bore fruit from a maul about ten yards from the Sefton line. Connor Whelan took the ball from the maul and broke down the blind side. He danced his way along the right hand touch line, evading several tacklers to score his side's second try of the morning. The try was converted by James Jeffers and Tarleton led by fourteen points.

Sefton were undaunted by this and laid siege to the Tarleton line. They ran the ball time after time at the Tarleton defence but they were unable find a way through, on one occasion they crossed the line but the ball was held up thanks to some fine defending by James Byrom and James Holden. Eventually the pressure told and Sefton crashed over for a try which was converted to make the score fourteen points to seven.

Despite the score Tarleton's confidence was on the up and they were beginning to run and pass the ball with increasing surety. Whilst on defence there was some great tackling from all of the team but in particular praise must go to James Holden, Jack Marsh and Robbie Scott for some excellent work to keep Sefton out of the game. The time spent prior to the match working on the dynamics of scrummaging was paying off as Tarleton secured a lion's share of the possession. From a scrum deep in Tarleton's half the ball was worked out to James Jeffers who found himself in a little bit of space. James collected the ball and proceeded to carve open the Sefton defence stepping left and right to claim an excellent solo try. Unfortunately he was unable to complete the conversion. The lead now stood at nineteen points to seven points.

The final whistle blew and Tarleton had claimed a well deserved victory, Sefton had pushed them hard but some good team play and firm tackling had provided the basis of the win. Today's victory was down to a good team performance with all eighteen players contributing to the success.

## **8 November 2009 Tarleton 7 Liverpool St Helens 7**

Remembrance Sunday and the pitch at Carr lane was surprisingly firm considering the amount of rain that had fallen during the week. With only a slight breeze and the sun threatening to break out it was a good morning for rugby.

Tarleton started the game kicking the ball deep into the Liverpool St Helens half of the pitch. It did not stay there for long as their opponents ran the ball back with great purpose. For the first quarter of the match Tarleton had to defend with all their might. With Jack Eckersley, Robbie Scott and James Holden leading the way with some excellent tackles; but on the whole the Tarleton forwards were not getting to grips with the match and LSH almost breached the home defence on a couple of occasions.

As the half wore on Tarleton came more into the match and there were some promising runs from Harry Atkinson, Jack Marsh, and Alex Massey. The match became more of an even contest with both sides tussling for supremacy. From a scrum in the middle of the pitch Tarleton produced their best move of the match. Connor Whelan fed Joe Wignall from the base of the scrum; Joe passed the ball through the back line until it reached James Jeffers on the left wing. James was in space, but there were still three defenders in front of him, he produced a boost of pace and shook of the attempted tacklers to claim the opening try of the match. The try was converted by Joe Wignall and Tarleton led by seven points to nil.

The second half began with LSH on the offensive. Their forwards were making some good runs into the home teams defence and it was only committed tackling that was keeping them out. LSH drove towards the try line and it was a last ditch tackle and grounding of the ball from Robbie Scott that



# Tarleton Rugby Union Football Club

prevented a try. Eventually the pressure told and from the five metre scrum one of the LSH forwards finally drove over the line to claim a try. This was converted and the match was all square at seven points each.

As the match continued Tarleton produced some better running rugby which saw James Jeffers, Jack Eckersley and Jack Marsh produce some excellent runs into the LSH defence but unfortunately Tarleton were unable to capitalise on these breaks. Once again better support play and recycling of the ball was needed to turn these breaks into try scoring opportunities. The final whistle blew with both sets of forwards contesting the ball in the centre of the pitch. A seven all draw seemed a fair result and both sides will rue what could have been.

Today's stand out players in the backs were Robbie Scott and James Holden for some committed defence; whilst in the forwards Jack Marsh, Jack Eckersley and Alex Massey worked tirelessly producing some big hits and some good breaks with ball in hand.

**1 November 2009**  
**Widnes 28 Tarleton 14**  
**Waterloo 35\* Tarleton 5**

**Barclays Cup** Barclays Cup day brought torrential rain and gale force winds; Blundellsands was not the most hospitable venue for this fixture. The winds were blowing in gale force from the Irish Sea and the rugby posts were heaving under the pressure. It was so windy that line outs were abandoned in favour of scrums!

Tarletons first opposition was Widnes. They attacked Tarleton for much of the match and their backs displayed some nice handling moves, but in the forwards and in the contact area Tarleton had their measure. Jack Marsh, Harry Atkinson, and Robbie Scott put into plenty of tackles on their opposite numbers. Unfortunately though Tarletons undoing was their handling, on numerous occasions ball was spilled and this allowed Widnes to pick up some easy tries. Without these errors this would have been a very close match as Tarleton scored a couple of opportunists' scores of their own.

The first try came from a Tarleton scrum about ten yards from the Widnes line. James Jeffers moved into the scrum half role, he gathered the ball from the base of the scrum. He then attacked the blind side of the Widnes defence, evading three tacklers to score in the corner. Then despite the howling wind that was swirling across the pitch he successfully converted the try to claim the extra two points.

Tarletons second try came courtesy of a fine piece of opportunist play by Jack Eckersley. Tarleton were trapped deep in their own half when Joseph Wignall found a bit of room, this enabled him to punt the ball down field. Due to the strength of the wind the Widnes team were unable to gather the ball until it had reached their try line. The Tarleton players chased the full length of the pitch. Jack Eckersley was first to arrive. He then went to tackle the Widnes full back that had collected the ball, stripped it out of his grasp and fell to the ground scoring a try in the process. Once again James Jeffers added the extras.

The second match was against Waterloo. Playing with the wind Tarleton held their own but as the game went on Tarleton began to tire and with this came lapses in concentration and errors. Waterloo capitalised on these opportunities to score several tries. Added to this a growing list of injuries reduced the team to eleven players at one point. But having said all that, Waterloo fully deserved their victory.

Tarletons only try was scored by Connor Whelan. Tarleton were awarded a penalty after Waterloo had moved offside at a scrum approx twenty yards. Connor reacted quickly, took a quick tap penalty and sped off towards the corner, despite a couple of attempted tackles he made it to the line and claimed an excellent solo try. Unfortunately by this time the wind was almost "hurricane force" and Joseph Wignall was unable to complete the conversion.



# Tarleton Rugby Union Football Club

**18 October 2009**  
**Leigh 14 Tarleton 7**

It was a cool dry morning at Hand Lane, the pitch was dry, freshly mown and perfectly flat it looked ideal for open rugby. As the players lined up Tony remarked "why is it the opposition's players always look bigger than ours". We soon found out how good their forwards were.

The first half began and the Leigh forwards demonstrated how powerful they could be and how well they had been drilled in the skill of driving mauls. Time and again they drove Tarleton back in the mauls; it seemed every maul was driven many yards towards the Tarleton line. The first half was not entirely one-way traffic but the Leigh forwards certainly had the upper hand. There were some enterprising breaks by Joe Cocker, Harry Atkinson, James Holden and Jack Marsh, but all too often these ended in mauls where Leigh managed to turn the ball over or drive Tarleton backwards. This overwhelming pressure eventually saw the Leigh pack score two well deserved tries which were successfully converted and by half time Leigh led fourteen points to nil.

At half time the Tarleton team were asked to get into the match; for much of the first half they had stood off the mauls and allowed the Leigh forwards to dominate the play. They were sent out for the second half with the objective of winning the half.

The second half was a vast improvement from Tarleton's point of view. Straight from the restart they seemed to show more purpose and determination. They began to contest the forward play; James Byrom, George Sylvester, and Matt Cocker began to make some big hits into the Leigh defensive line. Whilst in the line outs the forwards began to compete more, Alex Massey and Jack Marsh began to win some possession, and the forwards also applied pressure on any ball they could not secure.

This increased commitment meant that Tarleton had more possession and that the backs could begin to make some probing runs at the Leigh defence. We saw more of players carrying the ball forward; there were some good runs from Harry Forshaw, Connor Whelan, Joe Wignall, and James Holden. There was also more passing being displayed and questions were being asked of the Leigh defence. Eventually this improved play got its reward as James Jeffers rounded off an excellent passage of play to score a try in the left corner. The conversion was successfully taken by James Jeffers and the deficit was down to seven points.

Tarleton now seemed to have the appetite for the match and were asking questions on both flanks. A powerful break on the left wing broke down just inches short of the try line allowing the Leigh full back to gather the ball from the ruck and punt it some forty yards up field for an excellent touch. From the line out Tarleton won the ball and worked it through several pairs of hands out to the right wing where again the move broke down on the Leigh try line. This time one of the Leigh defenders took the ball over his try line and grounded the ball; from the ensuing drop out Tarleton found themselves back deep in their own half.

Not fazed by this Tarleton drove the ball back into the Leigh half and were once again asking questions of the Leigh defence but the move broke down when the ball was knocked forward. The referee blew for time and Leigh had won a game of two halves.

To put today's performance in perspective Leigh had recently put forty points past Manchester and over thirty points past Sedgley Park; so to lose the game by only seven points is not a bad performance. If the match had gone on a little longer Tarleton may even have got the equalising try that their second half performance deserved.

Stand out players today were Jack Marsh for his commitment and hard hitting display in the face of some large opposition forwards, Matt Cocker for some good runs and hard work in the second half, James Holden for some good runs and hard tackles, and lastly James Jeffers for his running with the ball and asking questions of the Leigh defence.



# Tarleton Rugby Union Football Club

**11 October 2009**  
**Tarleton 14 Ormskirk 7**

Both sides warmed up in the usual rugby weather of rain and strong wind across the Carr Lane pitches but by the time match started this had been replaced by a little bit sunshine and some almost blue sky. It was agreed to play the match in four ten minute quarters; this would allow the coaches to point out any issues and to allow rotation of players on both sides. As Ormskirk were a player short the home team loaned players throughout the match. Many thanks to Josh Lane, James Holden, and Declan Stewart who all played part of the match in a green jersey.

The first three quarters of this match were played mainly in the middle of the pitch with neither side making much use of the wings. The forwards drove at each other time and time again. When the ball did move out to the centres they too seemed to move the play back inside. As such the game was an arm wrestle of mauls and scrums. For Tarleton Jack Marsh, George Sylvester, James Byrom, and Alex Massey were working very hard but without any real reward. Whilst in the backs Harry Forshaw was looking increasingly comfortable at full back, and Joe Wignall was organising the backs in a more effective manner. Robbie Scott also showed up well in his spell at hooker. The effort involved was enormous and by the end of the third quarter both sets of players were beginning to blow a little.

At the start of the final quarter Ormskirk took the game to the home side and produced several probing runs into the Tarleton defence. Tarleton worked hard to keep them out and there was some excellent tackling from James Stockwyn, Harry Atkinson, Alex Massey and William Grogan. The momentum though was with Ormskirk and eventually they breached the Tarleton line as one of their forwards barged over from two yards out. The try was converted and Ormskirk led by seven points to nil.

Tarleton restarted and Joe Wignall bounced the ball into touch on the right hand side deep inside Ormskirk's half. From the line out the ball was worked back to the centre of the pitch. Eventually the play dissolved into a maul where Tarleton won possession. The ball then went through several pairs of hands, including Joe Wignall, and Harry Atkinson before finally reaching Joe Cocker. Joe did not need any encouragement and he outpaced the visitors defence to claim a wonderful try. Despite a swirling wind Joe Wignall converted the try and Tarleton were level at seven points each.

From the restart both sides struggled for supremacy and amidst this battle the referee pulled Ormskirk up for an infringement in the tackle. With three minutes left on the clock Tarleton gleefully accepted the penalty just inside their half of the pitch. Connor tapped the ball and gave a short pass to Jack Eckersley who took the ball and sprinted towards the Ormskirk defensive line. Running at an angle between their small left winger and centre, Jack evaded the attempted tackles and raced to the line to score an excellent individual solo try. The try was converted by Joe Wignall and Tarleton led by fourteen points to seven with two minutes to play.

Ormskirk restarted the game kicking deep into the Tarleton defence. Eventually the home side secured the ball and Joe Cocker booted the ball into touch hoping for full time. But the referee did not call time; instead he awarded Ormskirk a line out ten metres from the Tarleton line. Ormskirk won the ball and mauled towards the try line. The Tarleton players worked hard to repel this final drive; with time up on the clock the ball squirted out of the maul, over the try line and Tarleton grounded the ball. The referee blew for full time and Tarleton had secured the narrowest of wins.

Tarleton really played their "get out jail card today". The two late tries secured them the narrowest of wins against a very spirited Ormskirk team. There were both positives and negatives in today's match. Positives included; some excellent tackling, a few good handling moves, the scrum secured over 50% of the ball, and we held our shape better than before. Negatives included too much one out play, and some of our passing and handling was poor.

Stand out players today were Jack Eckersley for some strong running and hard hitting tackles all over the pitch, Joe Cocker for his all round running and commitment, and James Stockwyn for his ferocious tackling in the back line.



# Tarleton Rugby Union Football Club

**4 October 2009**

**Tarleton 14 Blackburn 7**

It was a lovely sunny still morning that provided the setting for the under 12s first home fixture of the season against Blackburn. It was a change to play them in fine sunny weather (Blackburn v Tarleton games are normally played in gales, driving rain, snow storms or arctic conditions).

Tarleton began the match in a very positive manner forcing the visitors onto the defence straight from the kick off. Joseph Wignall kicked a high ball deep into the middle of the Blackburn defence, players from both sides scrapped for possession. Blackburn eventually secured the ball and ran deep into the Tarleton half where the play remained for the first quarter of the match.

Blackburn's attack was asking all the questions and Tarleton did well to keep them out; in a large part due to some excellent tackling from Harry Atkinson, Alex Massey and Joe Cocker. The pressure was bound to tell but the home side stuck at it, giving away a couple of penalties in the process. From the second of these penalties one of Blackburn's large forwards received the ball about eight yards out and drove straight through the centre of the defence to score the opening try. This was converted and Blackburn led seven points to nil.

Tarleton restarted with another deep kick and Blackburn moved the ball up field once again back into the Tarleton half. The remainder of the half became something of an arm wrestle as both sides struggled for supremacy. There were some promising breaks from the home side, especially from James Jeffers, Jack Marsh, Miles Eaglestone and Connor Whelan but all too often they failed due to a lack of support or the inability to recycle the ball away from the contact area.

At half time Tarleton made several changes bringing on Matthew McGillivray, Josh Lane, Harry Forshaw, and George Sylvester for his debut. Blackburn started the second period kicking the ball into the Tarleton half. The ball was driven up field into Blackburn's half and once again the players contested every tackle with great ferocity and fought for any loose ball.

Following a scrum around midway Tarleton worked the ball across the field passing the ball through numerous pairs of hands to the right hand side of the pitch where the ball was finally offloaded in the tackle to Harry Atkinson who drove the ball to within two metres of line and Blackburn appeared to have stopped the move. But James Holden gathered the ball from the maul and with two Blackburn players in front of him and the touch line to his right James somehow dived over the would be tacklers to score in the corner. After a brief consultation with the touch judge the try was awarded. The try was converted by James Jeffers and the scores were level at seven each.

Blackburn restarted the game kicking the ball towards the Tarleton defenders. The ball was worked forward and both teams contested with great effort for possession. At times the play became a little messy with players on both sides scrapping for the ball, only to knock on or drop it once they had gained possession. From a maul/ruck approx fifteen metres from the Blackburn line Connor Whelan gathered the ball. He ran towards the opposition line and burst through the Blackburn defence evading several tacklers to score a wonderful solo try in the left wing channel. The try was converted by Joe Wignall and Tarleton led by fourteen points to seven.

The game ended with Blackburn once again on the attack asking more questions of the home teams defensive capabilities, again they were not found wanting as some big tackles were made with Jack Marsh, Harry Forshaw, and Harry Atkinson were their socks off in defence. With time up on the clock Alex Massey got hold of the ball and booted it in to touch. Full time and Tarleton had claimed a narrow victory in their first home game of the season.

It was pleasing to see the ball being passed across the pitch and to see the team use the full width of the pitch. Both wings saw plenty of the ball and there were some good runs on both flanks. Every player seemed to be involved today and this victory was built around an all round team performance which saw players working for each other. If our ball retention and recycling is improved there are better results to come.



# Tarleton Rugby Union Football Club

## Under 11s

No Match Reports provided.

## Under 10s

### Player Profiles

**Jack Aughton** - One of the first names on the team sheet, he rarely misses a match or training session. Whether playing wing or centre Jack has excellent ball skills and pace. He has also improved in the tackle so he is now one of our most feared tacklers.

**Daniel Barker** - He has made the fullback position his own. He is an excellent balanced runner and has an eye for the gap. His positional play has continued to improve with every game and he is fearless under the high ball.

**Patrick Booth** - A new addition to our squad this season but he plays like a veteran. Patrick has made the lock position his own and he has a physical presence on the pitch in his running, tackling and set scrum.

**Adam Harrison** - Another good season of improvement for Adam whose skill and commitment are increasing. Steadfast in defence with some notable tackling towards the end of the season, he is consistent, eager to get involved, trains hard and has shown growing promise and skill in the scrum.

**Tom Waterworth** - Exceptionally strong in the tackle, scrum and ruck, Tom is a powerhouse forward with the potential to mature into a really fine front row player. Very difficult to dislodge when in a good body position he creates quick possession for the team at the breakdown. With further confidence and game time he will undoubtedly become a destructive ball carrier.

**Tom Robinson** - Blessed with a very good rugby brain, Tom is a pleasure to coach as he very quickly absorbs and puts into practice every coaching point we cover in training. Particularly good at keeping the ball alive in contact, he has a great offloading game and we expect him to mature into an excellent back row forward.

**Jack Marsh** - Jack's first season has been an outstanding success. Playing at stand-off or centre, his exceptional pace from a standing start frightens defences and lightening quick changes of direction at high speed allow him to exploit even the smallest defensive gaps. A prodigious rugby talent, destined to make a huge impact, he is a vital part of a very powerful midfield.

**Calem Whelan** - Calem fully deserves every superlative that he has received this season from all varieties of touchline observers. Seemingly at the centre of all good passages of play, he has immense power, pace, spirit and resilience. An exceptional tackler and strike runner, he has the complete all-round game for the midfield. An outstanding season, for a player who embodies the fighting spirit of the team.

**Alfie Macadam** - Sometimes it's tempting to think there might be two Alfie's on the pitch at a time, such is his exceptional tackle count and work-rate – opponents have resorted to holding him down to keep him still! Utterly fearless and totally committed, he leads by example, contesting possession ferociously and winning multiple turnovers each game. A joy to watch bursting into attack from the back of a ruck.

**Harry Jones** - Another excellent season from Harry, who is a naturally gifted sprinter with an incisive turn of speed that can cut defences in two. Blessed with a great awareness of space, time



# Tarleton Rugby Union Football Club

and gaps, he is always looking to exploit attacking opportunities. Exceptional game awareness has led to Harry making many outstanding try-saving tackles. His leadership on and off the field is immense.

**Josh Dandridge** - A brilliant season for Josh, who is starting to relish the degree to which his strong and straight running can terrorise defences. Exceptionally powerful in contact, it takes several opponents to bring him down, and his ball retention is excellent. Tough and combative, he leads the pack with from the front and he never takes a backward step. Jumping at the back of the line, he works superbly with hooker John Rich who between them provide the most reliable set piece ball.

**John Rich** - John's progress this season has been remarkable. He has every potential to be a superb hooker - his line out throwing is wonderfully accurate, he is excellent in the scrum and in open play he is tough, competitive and uncompromising. A highly intelligent and increasingly skilful player, his natural leadership qualities are a huge asset to the team.

**Charlie Fone** - Charlie is undoubtedly destined to play rugby at a high level. A ferocious scrummager and runner he consistently delivers every game. His progress has been terrific to watch and is all the more astonishing, as this is his first season in the sport. Speed and power combined will always be a winning formula, and Charlie's development shows no sign of slowing down. A great first season.

**Natasha Rouffignac** - Natasha just keeps on getting better and better. Hugely committed and industrious, she is making the position of winger her own, linking and working very well with the front three in attack and defence. A winner of countless turnovers in the tackle with her trademark ripping of the ball, she is a true poacher, to be underestimated at the opposition's peril. When playing at scrum half, her distribution is excellent. An inspirational season.

**Leon Wignall** - Leon's electric speed over the first five yards is one of the team's most potent weapons from the base of the scrum. Elusive and incisive, he has had a brilliant season, making countless forays over the gain line and turning opponents inside out. He has the confidence and temperament that a great scrum half needs to get into the opposition's faces at scrum time and his competitiveness and ambition will ensure that he fulfils his undoubted potential in this position.

**Oli Parsons** - Oli has trained hard this season and in games has shown flashes of brilliance in the back line. Confident with the ball in hand, he runs strongly and is developing a good understanding of ball retention and continuity. A solid tackler and lively and popular player, he is an asset to the squad.

**Oscar Cameron** - Oscar's trademark flair and willingness to take responsibility spring from a deep seated sporting self-confidence, and his positive attitude to competition lifts any team he plays for. Always lively and attack-orientated he plays with panache and increasing skill which is starting to complement his natural pace.

**Lewis Joughin** - Lewis has the build and power of an outstanding loose forward and when he runs straight and with conviction, he is very difficult to tackle, breaking the opposition line on many occasions. Improved decision making at ruck time over this season has seen him deploy his power to very good effect and his increasing skills in contact are leading to more reliable ball retention when he carries. Overall a consistently very good season.

**Nathan Coll** - Nathan's power and strength mark him out from the touchline to even the casual observer as a player to watch closely, and his increasing technical skills show great promise. For a first season in the sport, Nathan has had an excellent start and has shown great potential. As his confidence in his decision making grows through training and games, he will undoubtedly mature into a fine front five forward next season.

**Euan Clarke** - Euan's rookie season in rugby has been an excellent debut, and he punches well above his weight in the tackle and brings a fierce desire to win to the game. As the season has



# Tarleton Rugby Union Football Club

gone on his understanding of his position on the pitch has improved and he communicates well with other backs. A very good season.

**Gareth Leech** - Gareth's commitment to rugby in his first season is outstanding and he has won many friends and garnered much respect from his coaches and team-mates for the way he has wholeheartedly thrown himself into both training and matches. Ever willing to take responsibility, his skill levels are rapidly improving and he has benefited hugely from game time. A great first season.

**George Barnes** - George has every potential to be a highly destructive and skilful forward and when he brings his physical presence to bear, he can consistently win ball for his team. Increasing technical ability is the result of working and concentrating hard during training, and as his confidence in his own abilities grows, he will no doubt deploy his physicality to great effect.

**Thomas Day** - Thomas's first season has been one of sustained and consistent effort and has been rewarded with a steady improvement in performance and the opportunity to demonstrate his capabilities in regular matches. He concentrates hard during training and this close attention to detail is starting to pay dividends as his technical skills and game-sense improve. A strong rookie season.

**Michael Hope** - Michael's quiet demeanour belies a dedication to his rugby and a strong commitment to the team he has served so well and reliably for four seasons. Ever willing in attack and defence, his effort in training and matches is unquestionable and his skills and technique are improving year on year. An outstanding asset to the team.

**Jack Greenwood** - Jack has taken to rugby very well and he relishes the contact side of the sport. Tough and uncompromising, his skill levels have improved over the course of the season and he has had some stand-out performances, notably against Wilmslow. Plenty of potential for the future.



# Tarleton Rugby Union Football Club

## **Under 9s**

No Match Reports provided.

## **Under 8s**

No Match Reports provided.

## **Under 7s**

No Match Reports provided.