



## Match Report

10 November

Away

Cambourne Exiles

Won 24:17



### Team

#### *Starting Line-up*

- 1) Stuart 'Booey' Cracknell 2) Ren Pesci 3) Richard Cowley
- 4) Dave 'Ken Kate' Cook 5) Rik Relph
- 6) Jonathan Burch 7) Chris 'Psycho' Edwards 8) Tom Powell
- 9) Rolando Pesci 10) Andrew 'Baz' MacKay
- 11) Josh Coughlan 12) Gladstone Watt 13) Ben Powell 14) Eddie 'Bill Bob' Murphy
- 15) Phil Carrington

#### *Replacements*

- 16) Matt 'Paperboy' Turner

### Report

It was an ideal day – the sun shone but the preceding 24 hours were very wet so the ground was nice and soft. The new changing facilities at Cambourne were very impressive being clean, secure and with under-floor heating. Cambourne goes from having the worst facilities in the league to the best (remember the pre-fab with the two showers).

We showed up with 15 players and the hope that Paperboy would make it sometime after kickoff. The kickoff was brought forward to around 2:00pm because of the England Fiji game so, once again, warm-up was curtailed and inadequate.

Cambourne were big and physical and from the outset showed determination to win the ball at every opportunity. They came at us again and again with strong physical attacks. This soon took a toll with Rolando damaging his shoulder very early in the game. Fortunately, he was able to carry on. Soon after, Ren went over on his knee. He wasn't so fortunate and had to be helped off the field. For the rest of the game, scrums were uncontested.

So 15 minutes in and we were down to 14 (13 ½ if you take Rolando's injury into account). At this point, Renegades rose to the challenge and began to take the game back to Cambourne. The numerical disadvantage caused everyone to try that bit harder and we began to look threatening. Eventually, Gladstone got the ball over the line on the left wing and managed to get the ball half way back towards the posts before touching down. Baz converted – 7-0.

The attacking play continued and this paid off as the ball was moved out to the left wing again giving Josh a golden opportunity to open his account for the season – an opportunity which he took with speed and confidence. Baz slotted this tricky conversion too (14-0).

This score seemed to waken Cambourne who came back hard and drove Renegades back into our own half, then into our 22 and the over they went for a well taken try. They missed the conversion and the game remained 14-5 until half time. Paperboy arrived just before the interval and evened up the numbers again.

Cambourne started the second half with aggression and soon the territorial advantage was capitalised on and another try was notched up. This one was converted – 14-12. Again they came and soon they took the lead with their third try following a cheeky chip for their winger who got a favourable bounce and took the try well. This was not converted – 14-17. It was beginning to feel like we were really missing the ball capturing skills of both Pescis.

However, falling behind caused a bit of a rally in the Renegades and some strong attacking moves by Psycho, Tom and Gladstone saw us gain territory and feed the ball out to Ben and Paperboy who gained even more ground. A penalty just outside the Cambourne 22 was run rather than kicked to no avail – it was a golden opportunity to equalise.

Again and again, the back row battered the opposition, the centres broke the line and Rolando developed a great one-handed scooping pass which was as accurate as it looked unpromising. Another penalty 40 metres out was taken as an equalising opportunity. Baz ignored the support he was getting from his teammates (“No pressure then Baz”) and took the kick with skill. The ball was slotted right between the posts – 17-17.

Equalising was a lift and the battering of the opposition continued, but continued to be met with solid defence from Cambourne. The clock was ticking and it began to look as if the two teams had ground each other to a stalemate. Finally, one of Rolando's one-handed passes fed Baz who passed to Tom shouting “Run!” Run he did and broke the defensive line with a good 50 metres to go to the Cambourne try line. With two defenders in hot pursuit he sprinted. He was unaware of a third defender coming at him from the side. Fortunately, the defender from the side managed to take out his own teammates and Tom was clear. Baz's boot maintained its 100% record – 24-17. The final whistle went as soon as the try was converted. It was that close.

The wonderful changing facilities at Cambourne were let down by their fabulously ineffective showers. On the upside, the new clubhouse has a bar so we were spared a visit to the Monkfield Arms.

This friendly was a valuable foretaste of what we can expect when we travel to Cambourne again in the league on December 8. We should expect a very tough game.

### Scores

Try: Gladstone Watt, Josh Coughlan, Tom Powell

Penalty: Andrew 'Baz' MacKay

Conversion: Andrew 'Baz' MacKay (3)



Baz for an excellent game at number 10 and a magnificent 40 metre penalty, slotted with great confidence.



Baz, for not taking the much simpler penalty that preceded his magnificent 40-metre penalty.

*Report by Eddie 'Bill Bob' Murphy*