



Match Report

24 November

Away

March Bears

Lost 7:27



Team

Starting Line-up

1) Stuart 'Booey' Cracknell 2) Dan Jerred 3) Richard Cowley

4) Brian 'Bwian' Smith 5) Tom Wykes

6) Chris "Ginger Chris" Leith 7) Chris 'Glove' Milne 8) Nick Skipworth

9) Andrew 'Baz' McKay 10) Darey Horn

11) Dave Steward 12) Daniel 'Ginger Dan' Leith 13) Rob Bevington 14) Eddie 'Billbob' Murphy

15) John 'JB' Bateson

Replacements

16) Jonni 'Gilbert' Sewell 17) Rik Relph 18) Jonathan Burch

Supporters

Bill Agg, Jack Cowley, James Jerred

Report

Classic Fenland winter conditions greeted us at March - it was cold, wet and miserable, and flat as far as the eye could see (which, to be fair, wasn't very far owing to the mist). The backdrop to the game was a massive wind turbine at one end of the pitch, and the soundtrack was provided by the traffic on the B1101 a few metres away. One might have expected a mud bath given the recent heavy rain, but in fact the pitch was in excellent condition and perfect for scrummaging.

The Renegades weren't sure what to expect from a scratch March side, but it soon became clear that they were a team to be reckoned with and that they meant business: from the kick-off March applied the pressure, pinning us back in our 22 until, five minutes into the match, they scored a well-worked try out on the right, which was converted, putting them seven points in front.

After the restart it was stalemate for several minutes, with play not venturing into either 22, until March intercepted a loose pass and pushed back into the Renegades' 22. Renegade hands in the ruck gave March a penalty on the right of the pitch, which was duly converted making the score 10-0.

A further period of play between the two 22m lines then eventually yielded a penalty to the Renegades, which was moved 10m further upfield when a March player refused to hand the ball over. With the ensuing kick Darey found touch within the March 22, but sadly we lost the line-out and the March fly-half put in a long kick which found touch way back in the Renegades' 22. For the next several minutes the Renegades benefited from a number of penalties, but then conceded one on the half-way line from which March had an unsuccessful kick at goal.

After this the home side kept play within the Renegades' 22 for a time, but without threatening the try-line. The Renegades eventually broke out and the ball went into touch on the half-way line, only for March to take the Renegades by surprise with a quick throw-in, and push back into the Renegades' 22 yet again.

Some hard work and perseverance allowed the Renegades to hold their own for a while, but then the March fly-half snuck a drop-goal, making the score 13-0.

With the score creeping up the Renegades realized that they needed to raise their game, and they pushed up as far as the March 22m line. A penalty to March was reversed owing to unsportsmanlike conduct from one of their players, and suddenly the Renegades were threatening the March line with a number of phases of play driving towards the line followed by a couple of 5m scrums. Sadly, the Renegades weren't able to capitalize on this pressure, and eventually a penalty to March allowed them to clear their lines and move play back up to half-way. Shortly after this March ran in a try from the half-way line, which they failed to convert despite it being close to the posts.

The first half concluded with the score at 18-0, with the home side very much in the driving seat: they had got the better of us in the line-out, spoilt many of our scrums with the tactic of kicking the ball at our front-row at the put-in, and bullied us in the loose. It was also clear that they had some very useful backs. The Renegades had a hill to climb in the second half, and Glove made this point forcefully in the half-time team talk. During the interval Gilbert came on for Billbob, Rik for Bwian, and Jonathan for Nick.

The second half started a bit like the first with March piling on the pressure and driving us back into our 22. However, Renegades gradually began to come back into the game. In response to Glove's words at half time, there was more passion and competing for the ball. However, March were still very strong and were very good as kicking the ball back well into the Renegades half in response to good Renegade gains.

March picked up another penalty to pull further into the lead at 21-0. Renegades piled on the pressure and began to spend more and more time in the March 22. Eventually, Dave Steward made it across the March line in the right corner but was held up. Renegades kept the pressure up but kept getting kicked back. Another penalty saw March pull 24-0 up. Again Renegades came back and spent some time camped on the March try line. Eventually, the pressure was rewarded when Baz went over for his first try for Renegades. He made short work of the conversion to bring the score to 24-7.

Sustained pressure created other chances, including a near thing for Dave Steward in the left corner. However, the March defence was strong and no further points came our way. In the closing Minutes, Dan Jerred was forced to come off with a dead leg. Bwian was delighted to go back on having cooled down nicely during the second half. March got a final penalty to bring the score to 27-7 where it stayed until the final whistle.

As Glove said at the end – the renegades did what he asked at half-time so no complaints about the second half. All credit to a very strong March team who outplayed us in every respect in the first half and worked us hard in the second.

We entertained ourselves on the way back to the dressing room by pushing James Jerred's van out of the muddy pit he had parked in.

Scores

Try: Andrew 'Baz' MacKay

Conversion: Andrew 'Baz' MacKay



Andrew 'Baz' MacKay for a good performance in the face of a really competitive March number 9 and for his first try.



James Jarred for parking in a swamp

Report by Jonathan "Goodluck" Burch and Eddie "Billbob" Murphy - on the sideline with a soggy pad, trench foot and hypothermia. Jonathan covered the first half and Eddie the second. Jonathan's coverage was vastly superior because he obviously didn't lose his notes like Eddie did. The order of scores in the second half may not be what actually happened ☹