



Match Report

Jan 4

Away Cantabs 2

Won 23-22



Team

Starting Lineup

- 1) Josh Cox 2) Ryan 'Shep' Shepperd 3) Jack 'Chinese' Mills
- 4) Aaron Stevens 5) Jake Sweet
- 6) Ryan Cox 7) Tom 'Proccy' Procter 8) Tom 'BFT' Powell
- 9) Dan 'Stockers' Stockbridge 10) Andrew 'Baz' MacKay
- 11) Jon Farrar 12) Harry 'H-bomb' Mills 13) Tom 'Tucker' Heathcote 14) Morgan Stephens
- 15) Ollie Witt

Replacements

- 16) Steve 'Marshy' Marsh 17) Michael 'Big Mike' Goode 18) Ren Pesci 19) Dave Cook
- 20) John Bateson 21) Eddie 'Billbob' Murphy

Report

The Christmas break had been a long one and, because training plans were mostly undermined by the weather, a large but slightly rusty bunch of Renegades gathered at the Cantabs ground. The 3:00pm kickoff was designed to try out the new floodlights that Cantabs had installed.

Cantabs kicked off and applied early pressure. An early penalty allowed them to advance well into the Renegades 22. They applied stiff pressure from the resulting lineout but Renegades defended well initially. However, Cantabs moved the ball wide to the right and stretched the defence creating the opportunity for their opening try in the right 5m channel. The conversion missed, 0-5. Renegades got a penalty from the kickoff and Baz slotted it calmly closing the gap, 3-5.

There followed a long period during which both teams applied pressure and defended resolutely. Renegades frustratingly gave away a large number of penalties which made their task harder. Eventually, a kick over the Cantabs line from Baz saw Jon apply huge pressure on the defence chasing back and forced them to concede a penalty. Despite shouts from Renegade supporters to take the points (Dave Steward), Baz opted to go for the corner which he did successfully. The lineout set up the driving maul and it powered over the line allowing Shep to touch down. The challenging conversion missed, 8-5.

Jon came off making way for Marshy on the left wing. As half time approached a penalty to Renegades gave Baz the chance to extend the lead. The ambitious penalty was from the 10m line in

the Cantabs half. The strike was perfect and the ball sailed between the posts for the additional three points, 11-5. That's how it remained at half time. Half time changes were Sam Jones for Jake and Big Mike for Josh.

Renegades kicked off the second half and gained an early scrum in the Cantabs 22 near the left touch. The ball came through many hands across to the right of the pitch where Shep, sold a lovely dummy before passing to BFT who timed a lovely pass to Morgan who was not going to be stopped. He scored in the right corner and Baz added the extra two with a lovely conversion, 18-5.

The kickoff was caught by Marshy on the left wing. He barrelled along the left side of the field breaking tackles and leaving the defence in his wake. As he entered the Cantabs 22, the excesses of Christmas began to catch up with him and he began to slow. It looked like the trailing defenders might catch him but fortunately, Proccy had been running in support. As the defence closed in, Marshy passed infield and Proccy angled across the pitch to score in the left corner. The conversion missed, 23-5.

It wasn't very long into the second half and it looked as if Renegades had the game wrapped up. Cantabs, however, had other ideas. Sustained pressure saw them break through the middle of the Renegades defence and score a converted try, 23-12. The situation was not helped when Ollie was given a yellow card for not heeding the ref's command to get his hands off the ball.

While he was off, Cantabs kept up the pressure and took advantage of some very relaxed policing of the offside line by the referee. This allowed them to charge down a clearance kick and score another try which remained unconverted, 23-17.

As full time approached, Cantabs broke through the middle again and scored to the right of the posts. This brought them within one point of Renegades. The only had to convert the try to take the lead. The conversion looked distressingly kickable. The atmosphere was very tense as the Cantabs fly half prepared to kick. He approached the ball in what looked like a casual manner and struck it wide! It was an enormous let off for Renegades.

Renegades attacked from the restart. They advanced into the Cantabs 22 and there followed a sustained period of pick and go which saw Renegades advance slowly towards the Cantabs line. There must have been well more than 20 phases. Eventually, tired hands infringed and Cantabs were able to relieve the pressure. They kicked towards half-way and as the lineout prepared, the referee called last play. Cantabs threw in but Renegades managed to disrupt their catch and captured the ball. The ball was passed back to Baz who calmly kicked the ball into touch.

That was probably the most exciting game that Renegades has played for a few seasons. The teams were well matched. All credit to Cantabs to come back from 23-5 down to nearly snatch the game. As it happens, they got both bonus points.

The win was enough for Renegades to win the league. The points difference is too great for Newmarket to close it now. There was a heartfelt rendition of *We are the champions* in the dressing room after the game. And Harry's ribs survived!



Scores

Tries: Ryan 'Shep' Shepperd, Tom Procter, Morgan Stephens

Conversions: Andrew 'Baz' MacKay (1)

Penalties: Andrew 'Baz' MacKay (2)



Jack 'Chinese' Mills for a great work rate crossing the gain line without fail.



Ollie Witt for getting a yellow card

Match report by Eddie 'Billbob' Murphy

Pictures by Peter Haigh (for the full set of pictures see [Peter's Flickr Page](#))



