



## Match Report

December 21

Away

Saffron Walden 2

Lost 38-26



### Team

#### Starting Lineup

- 1) Tom 'Proccy' Procter
- 2) Matt 'Faiersy' Faiers
- 3) Geoff Kirby
- 4) Aaron Stevens
- 5) Dan Phillips
- 6) Ben Powell
- 7) Ollie Witt
- 8) Lewis Pennett
- 9) Max Burgess-Clerke
- 10) Dan 'Stockers' Stockbridge
- 11) Judo George
- 12) Harry Mills
- 13) Tom 'Tucker' Heathcote
- 14) Barney Baker
- 15) Josh 'Slugz' Vail

#### Replacements

- 16) Richard 'BTW' Fickling

### Report

It was a dull rain-threatened day as Renegades gathered at the Saffron Walden ground at Henham. Clearly, whoever christened the club as Saffron Walden had, at one time, worked for Ryanair. Renegades had 16 players, and Richard BTW began the game on the bench. The heavy clay pitch was to have an important influence on how the game was conducted. The lights went off as kick off approached and stayed off for a while adding some excitement. They did come back on before they were needed.

Walden kicked off and Renegades came back at them. A knock on gave a scrum to Walden and they used it as a platform to build an attack score a converted try in the left corner, 7-0. The conditions dictated scrappy play for a while and Walden seemed to be coping better. They stole a Renegades lineout and hacked the ball through touching down over the Renegades line. The conversion was good, 14-0.

The play ebbed and flowed for a while with Renegades trying to outflank Walden who had some very quick wingers. An attack by Renegades went deep into the Walden half and they entered the Walden 22 for what seemed like the first time in the game. Renegades managed to get a maul moving in the direction of the Walden line, but it was stopped. The ball was spun out to Ben who wasn't going to be stopped, and he crashed over to open the Renegades account. Max added the conversion, 14-7.

Walden immediately attacked again and a kick through was chased by Walden and Renegade players. A renegade hand got to it first and a 22 drop out followed. Walden received and attacked again and touched down well to the right of the posts. The conversion missed this time, 19-7.

A short time later one of the very speedy Walden wingers began a screaming run along the left touchline. He made many yards before cutting in and touching down not far left of the posts. The straightforward conversion added the two, 26-7.

In response, Renegades began to build a good attack again. They drove up to the Walden line and had quite a few attacking runs trying to pierce the Walden defence. Having exhausted the opportunity to bash through the strong defence the ball was spun to the right and went to ground. Aaron picked up and powered over the line to score. Max converted, 26-14.

In the dying minutes of the first half, it looked like Walden had scored again but it was disallowed, much to Renegades relief. That's how things remained until the interval.

Renegades kicked off the second half. It wasn't long before Walden added another try which remained unconverted, 31-14. When kicking the restart, Max managed to tear his calf muscle and was forced to retire. Richard went on and there was a shuffle of positions.

The increasingly strong wind favoured Walden and repeatedly Renegades advanced only to spill the ball and chase it back down the field as Walden lofted the ball and let the wind do the work. A very threatening attack along the right touchline saw a very swift Walden player chopped only just short of the Renegades line. A while later following one of their lofted kicks, Walden had a scrum in the right corner. They spun the ball left and scored to the left of the posts. The conversion was good despite Sluz's best efforts to block the kick, 38-14.

Then Renegades changed. They ground their way up the pitch battering through the middle with a series of beautifully timed attacking runs. They approached the Walden line but instead of keeping the momentum going, Ollie spun the ball very unsympathetically to Barney who failed to catch the ball from behind his head. Walden picked the ball and lofted it again right down into the Renegades' 22. Richard C was heard uttering profanities when he saw how far he had to run!

Having done it once, Renegades decided that up the middle was the tactic and proceeded to do it all again with fantastic runs by Harry, Ollie and Proccy. Walden couldn't deal with it and Renegades advanced relentlessly again. They were just short of the Walden line when the ball went loose, and Aaron hacked it through and touched it down over the line. Stockers converted, 38-21.

Renegades were now on a roll. The attacking runs took them into the Walden 22 again. This time the ball was spilled forward. Walden attempted a clearance kick off the resulting scrum, but it was charged down. In the resulting melee, the ball crossed the Walden line and Fairsey managed to get a hand to it. The conversion missed.

Chairman's quote: "Why didn't they play like this in the first half."

Renegades were building another attack when the Referee called time. It seems clear to me that if the game had another 20 minutes, Renegades would have snatched it. Sadly, that isn't how it works. There is no doubt that a month without a game before such an intense contest hampered Renegades' performance and getting game legs going took a while. However, when Renegades got going it was a superb performance. One that everyone who played can be proud of. It is worth

noting the performance of the scrum too. With a front row that had never played as a front row before, they drove Walden backwards on a number of occasions. It was a joy to watch.

Merry Christmas!



Louis Pennett – cracking all round performance



Ollie Witt – butchering a try scoring opportunity with a shocking pass

### Scores

Tries: Ben Powell, Aaron Stevens (2), Matt 'Faiersey' Faiers

Conversions: Max Burgess-Clerke (2). Dan Stockbridge

*Match Report by Eddie Murphy*