

Saturday 13th October 2012.....View from the (not so) waterproof Kitbag

Hasting & Bexhill III 51 - 0 Maidstone V

Four seasons in one day! It must be the annual seaside trip to the picturesque and historic Hastings.

Family, work commitments, injuries and sabbaticals meant the Barbarians were always struggling to field a team for one of the toughest fixtures of the season. With a call to arms made midweek, a scratch 15 were able to take to the pitch with great thanks for a last minute dash to the rescue from the on-sabbatical skipper, Ian Ausher.

The available players took to the pitch with only two recognised backs and no scrum half but, in true Barbarian style, a group of new and mixed ability lads faced the opposition with determination and enthusiasm for the task ahead.

Unfortunately in the first serious play of the game our makeshift budding centre partnership clashed heads in a tackle resulting in a lot of spilt claret, concussion and the immediate loss of two Barbarians, Alex Soles & Ryan Wheeler. With depleted numbers Alex tried to soldier on but it became apparent that his injury was more serious than first thought as he lined up in the wrong position facing the wrong way whilst his eye balls were also uncoordinated.

Sportingly H&B leant one of their numerous substitutes, a young lad new to the game who manfully took up the responsibility of shoring up the centres.

With H&B's top teams not having a game their team was bolstered with a few heavyweights which kept the scoreboard ticking over whenever they took to the pitch using the agreed rolling subs to ensure everyone got a game.

The usual free flowing style of 5th team rugby was somewhat hampered by difficult conditions and some curious refereeing decisions. However the lack of key players in key positions and a formidable opposition meant this was always going to be tough asked for the spirited XV wearing the MMB shirts.

The magical appearance of a rainbow in the Barbarians try zone before the game started seemed to inspire H&B to mine for gold and so the first half ended 31-0 as the H&B big hitters punched through the inexperienced lines.

The first half was also noticeable for the stalwart Barbarian full back, Mr Hodges, cementing his nomination for the annual handbag award as a fellow Barbarian dared to make a suggestion on how he may improve his game. Thankfully the bruised egos were soothed and numerical numbers were restored for the greater cause.

Following some tactical input from Coach Oakley, a reshuffle of the XV meant a switch releasing the magnificent Oakley Jnr from his scrum-half duties to command the line out and the loose play.

Whilst this move brought some joy and stability it was soon negated by the loss of the Barbarian Hooker, Mark Ingram, resulting in once again calling upon the generosity of H&B.

The 2nd half saw H&B score 20 unanswered points but the Barbarians in testing circumstances fronted up time and again and took the battle to the opposition in good spirits and steely determination.

The Barbarians' very own roving photographer, Phil Hadfield, overheard the opposition comment from the sidelines ***"Good team this, they are losing, but their heads have not gone down, still playing good rugby and have not gone all narky"***

The guys wearing the Barbarian shirts on Saturday should rightly be proud of their efforts and for keeping alive the spirit of 5th team social rugby. Well done all, (to Skipp, Clarke & Ausher for keeping the team together) and especially young Mike Oakley our man of the match, a special player with courage skill and maturity beyond his years.

A special thanks to Brian and the Hastings boys for generously providing players, for our very own plethora of skippers past and present (Ausher, Bradley, Clarke & Quinn) in their attempts to get the numbers for the game.

Just a reminder to all Barbarians – as has always been the way, you are all encouraged to enjoy and play at the highest possible level you want to at MFC. The 5th team over the years has found and/or nurtured numerous players who have gone on to play at the highest level in MFC. Nothing makes the senior members prouder in playing a full roll in the club and looking after the welfare of newcomers to the game. Rest assured, all Barbarians, past and present will always be welcome back and many from the last decade have standing invitations to play and tour irrespective of where they are now or who they play for or at what level.

Once a Barbarian, ALWAYS a Barbarian.

Finally, some housekeeping: - Senior Training is at the club is on Tuesdays and Thursdays. There is a 5th team run on Tuesday evenings at 7pm with Richard "Teflon" Hadfield and appropriate 5th team level sessions on Thursdays with coaches Frost, Oakley & Ellesmere. They give their time freely and selflessly so please make the most of their generosity and improve your skills fitness and team play. Training together + playing together = Winning together (sometimes) and having fun with mates.

Thank you all and here's to the next game v Aylesford 4s.