

3rd Team Season Review 2009 to 2010

Warwickshire 3rd team League									
Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Diff	Pts	Adjust
Manor Park II	18	16	0	2	514	228	286	66	0
Newbold on Avon III	17	15	0	2	600	229	371	62	0
Shipston on Stour III	16	10	0	6	410	218	192	46	0
Lemaington Spartans	16	9	1	6	364	275	89	44	0
Spartans (Midlands) III	16	7	1	8	271	303	-32	38	0
Harbury III	17	7	0	10	272	363	-91	38	0
Old Coventrians III	15	5	0	10	200	468	-268	28	-2
Coventrians III	16	4	1	11	230	475	-245	28	-1
Kenilworth Pirates III	16	4	1	11	252	432	-180	27	-2
Bedworth Bears	16	1	4	11	215	337	-122	22	-1

DATE	HOME		AWAY
30 August 2009	Shipston on Stour 3's win at the Throckmorton Sevens		
05 September 2009			
12 September 2009	Shipston on Stour III	10 - 32	Leamington III
19 September 2009	Witney III	5 - 26	Shipston on Stour III
26 September 2009			
03 October 2009	Shipston on Stour III	49 - 10	Chipping Norton III
10 October 2009	Shipston on Stour III	44 - 0	O Covents III
17 October 2009	Manor Park	22 - 15	Shipston on Stour III
24 October 2009	Shipston on Stour III	17 - 51	London Irish Vets
31 October 2009	Cancelled		
07 November 2009	Bedworth III	5 - 12	Shipston on Stour III
14 November 2009	Shipston on Stour III	8 - 17	Spartans III
21 November 2009			
28 November 2009	Shipston on Stour III	v	Coventrians
05 December 2009	Newbold on Avon Vets	24 - 8	Shipston on Stour III
12 December 2009	Harbury II	5 - 20	Shipston on Stour III
19 December 2009	Spartans III	v	Shipston on Stour III
26 December 2009			
02 January 2010	Pershore III	v	Shipston on Stour III
09 January 2010			
16 January 2010	Shipston on Stour III	Cancelled	Bedworth III
23 January 2010	Kenilworth III	5 - 53	Shipston on Stour III
30 January 2010	Shipston on Stour III	20 - 7	Harbourne
06 February 2010	Shipston on Stour III	3 - 5	Oxford Harlequins
13 February 2010	O Covents III	7 - 79	Shipston on Stour III
20 February 2010	Shipston on Stour III	3 - 39	Newbold III
27 February 2010	Shipston on Stour III	17 - 29	Manor Park II
06 March 2010	Leamington III	14 - 19	Shipston on Stour III
13 March 2010	Shipston on Stour III	14 - 43	Chipping Norton III
20 March 2010	Shipston on Stour III	51 - 0	Coventrians II
27 March 2010	Shipston on Stour III	51 - 10	Harbury II
03 April 2010			
10 April 2010	Old Leamingtonians	0 - 70	Shipston on Stour III
17 April 2010			
24 April 2010	Worcester Wanderers III	v	Shipston on Stour II
01 May 2010			
08 May 2010	Shipston Sevens		

Saturday 27th March 2010

Shipston 3rds 51 pts Harbury 2nds 10 pts

Saturday's game at Mayo Road saw the visit of Harbury 2nds in a league clash that had The Rams in fine form. With the disappointment of having to play unopposed scrums as Harbury declined the offer of a front row replacement the thirds decided to take the game to the opposition in fine style. Tricky Wilson proved to be a constant threat at Full Back whenever he ran the ball back at a Harbury team that tried to use the wind that was blowing down the pitch in their favour. A score came from Tricky as a result of a counterattack that encouraged Shipston to stretch the visitors at every opportunity and Dave Graham, Carl Hamilton and Will Howard added their names to the score sheet. Particularly pleasing was the magnificent forward effort with Mike Watkins taking a leaf out of the Brendon school of tackling as he took the No 8 down with a crunching tackle. Nasty Nick and Richard Spencer dominated the lineout and were seen charging deep into the opposition at every opportunity. It was inevitable that further scores would come for the keen Lee Williams, Tricky Wilson and Carl Hamilton with a trade mark jinking run to the line - but perhaps the biggest cheer came for two debut tries for Shipston's introduction of a new winger, Charlie Speechley, who scored twice in the second half. One try was a particularly fine effort as he shrugged off tacklers and covering defenders to dive and score in the corner - all of which proved too much for the boot of Carl Hamilton who prefers a closer inspection of the posts for his pots at goal. A fine performance from a committed Shipston 3rd team - the only frustration being for the writer of this article who is being forced to watch the team from the sidelines as he sees out the rest of the season by resting - to prepare for the next.

Saturday 20th March 2010

Shipston 3rds 51 pts Coventrians 2nds 0pts

Saturday saw The Shipston 3rds welcome Coventrians 2nds to Mayo Road in a rearranged League game. The pattern for the game was soon established with the home side taking control up front with surging runs from the powerful backrow with Sam Russell making a welcome addition to the 3rd team ranks. The conditions demanded a platform to be established by the forwards and they did not disappoint. The first half saw scores from Carl Hamilton, John Alexander, Andy Powell and a rampant Chairman Richard Spencer, also a well controlled set piece scrummage that resulted in a try for the No 8 Sam Russell.

With a 27 point lead at half time the game was never going to be a problem but it could easily have degenerated into a turgid mud dominated battle. To the Rams credit whenever possible they used their dangerous backs and Nick Briggs despite the difficult conditions linked well with his centres whenever possible. Although for once eschewing the option to pass he set off on a determined run that saw him score early in the second half, further scores came from Muddy, Sam Russell and a particularly energetic game from the club fitness coach Graham Eastgate who had a thoroughly industrious afternoon chasing everything and anyone and he was rewarded with a debut try for Shipston Rugby Club. The game was also pleasing to be able to introduce one or two new faces into the 3rds and a welcome to Ally Robertson to the club. The game closed out with The Rams 51-0 the victors.

Saturday 13th March 2010

Shipston 3rds 14 pts. Chipping Norton III'S 43 pts.

The local rugby rivals from North Oxon brought a strong and largely youthful team to Mayo Rd. for this recently arranged fixture. Shipston started well enough with solid scrums (indeed Shipston comfortably held their own in this dept. throughout) and with the lion's share of territorial domination..but ,critically ,could not find the 'zip'to make any clean line breaks to open up the visitor's defence...After 20 minutes stalemate the powerful visiting centre (Chippy fed off his standing up in tackle off-loads throughout) created a try for the experienced fly half Mark Watson, and this gave Chipping Norton confidence .They never really looked back.. For the home side, Richard Spencer was rock solid in the line out, Nick Holdsworth, Andy Powell and Andy Cox, worked hard in the forwards to produce ball for scrum half Charlie Cox..but it was never really quick enough for fly half Nick Briggs or centres Richard Wilson and the vastly experienced Dave Graham to use as gaps there were, none. The 25-0 half time score was a fair reflection of the play. In the 2nd period ,with the wind and the slope in their favour Shipston did manage to score a couple of consolation tries ,one and outstanding individual counter attack from turnover ball by Richard Wilson and a rather straightforward No8 pick up and feed (Tim Brendon), through Charlie Cox to Nick Briggs whose angled run completely bemused the visitor's defence..Richard Wilson did the kicking duties..As Shipston tired, gaps began to appear and by the end, Chipping Norton were able to counter attack from deep to score further tries. As always a masterful refereeing performance by club officianado Rob Hawkins' meant that the game was enjoyable for both teams...much more fun than watching the fare that was on offer later in the evening as 'entertainment' North of the Border!

Saturday 27th February 2010

Shipston 3rds 17 - 29 Manor Park 2nds

In a rearranged league match against title chasers Manor Park on Saturday Shipston came off second best. The conditions were difficult for both teams as the pitch had taken a lot of water that made handling something of a lottery. The game was lost in the first 15 minutes when The Rams rather than starting, acted as spectators and watched as Manor Park raced into a 15-0 lead with soft tries. It was only later on in the half that Shipston woke up and the pack started to play as if they meant it - this resulted in a penalty try for Charlie Cox after good work from Foxy pinning the opposition fly half on the try line with a smother tackle. The second half started with Shipston firmly taking control of the set piece aspects of the game and Lee Williams scored after a kick and chase that brought the scores to 15-12. Sadly the concentration slipped and the opposition scored a try that was allowed despite a potential knock on and the initiative passed to Manor Park. The Rams pack further utilised the muscular aspects of the game by employing the rolling maul as an effective play and this resulted in a try for Tim Brendon and a closing of the scores to 22-17. Shipston then had their moments to win the game as the opposition line was nearly breached on a couple of occasions but it was not the Rams day and Manor Park concluded the game with the final score of the afternoon taking it to 29-17.

Saturday 20th February 2010

Shipston 3rds 3 pts Newbold on Avon Vets 39 pt

Shipston 3rds entertained unbeaten league leaders Newbold vets on Saturday to Mayo Road and on a day when they needed a full side they were disappointed to lose key players to other engagements and first team call ups. The game started well enough with The Rams early pressure yielding a penalty that Nick Briggs took Newbold struck back quickly and pounced on any errors that were made by Shipston and a lead that proved to be only fleeting was soon overtaken. The visitors showed good combination of forwards and backs and scored 5 tries against a stretched Rams defence and departed clear cut victors.

Saturday 13th February 2010

Old Coventrians 3rds 7 - 79 Shipston on Stour

The thirds travelled to Coventry for a League fixture against a side they had already beaten well at home earlier in the season. Despite being the blue rinse side in terms of age the Shipston Rams belied their years and set about dismantling the opposition with free flowing rugby. The willingness of the team to involve backs and forwards led to the opening score for winger Lee Williams, indeed he had an afternoon to remember as he scored 6 tries with excellent finishing and great determination. With the game as a contest effectively over just before half time the Coventrians showed a glimpse of attacking ability and scored a try that took the score to 43-7 but perhaps this was not such a good idea as it spurred the Rams to even greater efforts and with a new second row pairing of Nasty Nick and Spenny charging around the pitch like men possessed the game was totally in Shipstons control. Particularly when Nick Holdsworth galloped 60 yards, an unusual feat for the engine room, and then to the amusement of his team mates managed not to score with the line at his mercy. However he proved the inspiration for Steve Unitt to set off on his own solo run down the pitch and he decided to emulate his Rams compatriot by finishing off his break by passing to an imaginary team member in touch. These moments aside, scores came from the irrepressible Richard Wixey who covered a huge amount of ground, Dave Wells and a debut try for the thirds from Richard Spencer who certainly seemed to be enjoying his afternoon.

Saturday 30th January 2010

Shipston 3rds 20 pts Harbourne 3rds 7pt

On a cold afternoon at Mayo Road The Rams entertained replacement opposition Harborne 3rds. The game started well enough for Shipston with Nick Briggs making an early break that should have led to a try but unfortunately in the scoring zone the home side were not being clinical enough. The surprise came when Harborne pounced on an error and skipped through to score under the posts for a 7 point lead. Shipston's response was to go straight back down to the other end and eventually work the ball to Lee Williams who scored an unconverted try. At 7-5 down at half time The Rams felt that they needed to be more positive and the scores would come. As so often happens against 3rd team opposition they decide to kick their way out of trouble, and time after time they kick the ball to The Rams talismanic full back Keith Hoskin who inevitably sets off on a jinking run that turns defence into attack and rolls back the years. The opening try of the second half came after such a run as Shipston were 8-7 up at this point and Hoskin worked his magic to free Muddy Waters on the wing who pinned his ears back to score in the corner. This was followed by a superb individual effort from Carl Hamilton who shrugged off the tackles and showed why he is such an asset to the team this season. The Rams ended the game very much in the ascendancy and worthy winners by 20-7. Mike Watkins, Steve Unitt, Mash, Nasty Nick, Wixey, Andy Cox, Tim Brendon, Daryl Hunter, Charlie Cox, Nick Briggs, Paul Horton, Carl Hamilton, Dave Graham, Muddy Waters, Lee Williams, William Howard, Keith Hoskin

Saturday 23rd January 2010

Kenilworth 3rds 5pts Shipston on Stour 3rds 53pts

Shipston 3rds completed their winter training last week on the slopes at Ilmington and were eager to seek action of the rugby variety with a game against Kenilworth 3rds. Shipston started the game with a side packed with rugby playing experience and used it to good effect in the opening 20 minutes of the first half. Indeed it seemed as though Kenilworth were taken completely by surprise as the Rams demonstrated first class rugby technique with forwards and backs combining flawlessly to score excellent tries through Dave Graham and Carl Hamilton. What was particularly pleasing was the yellow blanket of Rams forwards that hunted the ball as a group. Daryl Hunter rampaged towards the line only to be stopped just short but happy to find Neil Griffiths on his shoulder to finish the move off for his inaugural try for Shipston. This was followed moments later by his second row partner the reliable Nick Holdsworth for his first try for the club. With Carl Hamilton eventually getting his kicking boots on The Rams finished the half 41 points up against a bemused home side. Kenilworth to their great credit regrouped at half time, introduced some old heads into their side and started to make an impact on the game. Indeed the opening score of the second half was due to a well worked try from the entire Kenilworth team which galvanised The Rams to greater efforts, but with the excellent Martin Goodman having to go off Shipston were forced to reorganise and reintroduce skipper Paul Horton back into the game. Pressure was reapplied and platforms created, allowing Dave Graham to score the third of his scores and Tim Brendon to muscle his way over for a brace of tries. The game concluded with The Rams in the ascendancy and a thoroughly deserved win against good opposition. Martin Goodman, Steve Rowan, Mark Ashworth, Neil Griffiths, Nick Holdsworth, Tim Brendon, Andy Cox, Daryl Hunter, Richard Wixey, Charlie Cox, Nick Briggs, Paul Horton, Carl Hamilton, Dave Graham, Muddy Waters, Keith Hoskin

Saturday 9th January 2009

With the snow making the ground unplayable at Mayo Road the Shottery fixture has been put on ice but the interpid members of the Shipston 3rds decided on a spot of Winter sports on Ilmington Hill. Wixey spent the previous evening constructing "The Beast" in his workshop which would take up to 4 at warp speed down the hill. It proved to be the fastest mode of transport down the slope as The Brendon family will testify, particularly Flip who executed a perfect triple salko and double toe loop exit out of the back of the sledge. The Hamilton connection showed that two up on the Beast proved to be a fast option as they avoided the large tree and set a fastest time. The large plastic sheet provided by Andy Cox was great for team bonding as two thirds of the back row climbed on board plus the Skipper for a ride that was at the very least the equivalent of "The corkscrew" at Alton Towers. This inspired other family members to have a go with Charlotte Horton showing her father how it should be done. The most spectacular wipe out of the day came when a gaggle of Hunters and Griffiths finished their run with elbows connecting with cheeks and bruises the end result but no tears! The younger members of the third team also joined in the fun with the Nasties settling for repeated runs up and down the Nursery Slopes till Nick could not manage any more and retired to the Red Lion. The whole event was recorded for posterity by The Health and Safety Executive who appeared on the scene with a camera in the form of Clive Brooks, he recorded the final solo Mash run that pretrified the flock of sheep at the bottom of the hill as Mr Incredible hurtled towards them intent on creating a mutton stew. The afternoon was rounded off in fine style at the Red Lion where it is quite likely that next weeks game will be held as well .

Saturday 5th December 2009

Newbold on Avon Vets 24 pts Shipston on Stour 3rds 8pts

Shipston 3rds first visit to Newbold in the League proved to be a difficult one made more so with the loss of two key players in the morning to the firsts. Newbold Vets are the current league leaders in this very competitive Warwickshire league and soon showed their credentials with a 12 point lead opening up after no more than 20 minutes played. However Shipston came back into the game with jinking runs from reliable fly half Nick Briggs who constantly crossed the gain line and caused all sorts of problems for the Newbold defence. A penalty from William Howard saw The Rams close the gap only to be pushed back further by a try just before half time to make it 17-3. The game could very much have become a one sided affair at that point but Shipston rallied and spurred on by devastating tackling from Tim Brendon, acting skipper for the day, the Rams took every opportunity to tear into the opposition particularly through the centre with Keith Hoskin to the fore with break after break that sadly just couldnt be finished off. The opposition only once threatened the Shipston line in the second half but it resulted in a try from the Newbold strong running centre, leaving Shipston an afternoon without crossing the line but in true thirds style the team as one kept going till the end, and with Charlie Cox otherwise detained on the touchline Keith Hoskin fed the ball in slow motion for Tim Brendon to score a deserved try at the death under the posts and a competitive performance from Shipston 3rds. Team: Graham Eastgate, Shaun Matthews, Nick Kench, Henry Morgan, Nick Holdsworth, Andy Powell, Tim Brendon, Dave Wells, Daryl Hunter, Charlie Cox, Nick Briggs, Keith Hoskin, Phil, William Howard, Lee Williams

Saturday 14th November 2009

Shipston on Stour 3rds 8 pts Spartans 3rds 17pts

On a blustery day at Mayo Road The visitors to Shipston were the Spartans 3rds. A changed Shipston side meant there was a welcome back to Duncan Mills and Jem Mountford stalwarts of the club from a few years ago and at the opposite end of the spectrum a new youngster Dan Cross who acquitted himself very well. The game started well enough for The Rams with early pressure leading to a penalty from Carl Hamilton operating off one achilles tendon for most of the match, in fact with Paul Horton nursing a knee injury the centres only had two good legs between them. The scores were level at half time but territorially Shipston seemed to be having the better of it, despite losing Steve Unitt from the front row with Andy Powell stepping up to the plate and a reorganised back row that saw Deano enter the fray. The game was ignited from an excellent try by Carl Hamilton as he took on much of the Spartans defence to score an unconverted try. At 8-3 up the home side seemed to be well in control and should have extended their lead further after moves that involved much of the team broke down close to the line. With the pack coming under pressure in the tight pieces Spartans took their chance and pounced on an error to score and take the lead at 10-8. With Tim Brendon leading the way with spectacular trademark tackles on the opposition the game could still have been won, but it was not to be as in the dying moments of the game the Spartans rallied and scored a try to win outright 17-8. Team: Steve Unitt, Rees Gidley, Duncan Mills, Nick Holdsworth, Andy Powell, Tim Brendon, Andy Cox, Chris Forman, Jem Mountford, Nick Briggs, Paul Horton, Carl Hamilton, Dan Cross, Muddy Waters, Keith Hoskin, Deano.

Saturday 7th November 2009

Bedworth 5 pts - 12 pts Shipston III

The thirds travelled to Coventry to play Bedworth 3rds on Saturday for a hard contest with some key players missing, notably in the front row but Jack Copeland and Henry Mace stepped up to the plate and made themselves available. The 3rds were also indebted to Will Dyche, Chris Ransome and Andy Grudgings (apologies for the misspelt surname) who agreed to come over to act as reserves, in fact the assistance given by the seconds was greatly appreciated. Bedworth 2nds had late that morning cried off from coming over to Mayo Road which inevitably meant that the opposition was not going to be what the 3rds perhaps should have expected. The game opened with The Rams exerting all the territorial pressure that led to a determined run from Carl Hamilton in the centre and that resulted in a try and a 7-0 lead, other opportunities arose but further scores were not forthcoming. At half time the opposition strategically strengthened their team in the pack and the middle of the park but before the new opposition settled down The Rams backs proved to be the difference as they moved the ball swiftly to the wing to allow Lee Williams a gallop to the line and a 12-0 lead. The remainder of the game then became a huge battle of attrition as Bedworth thundered into the Shipston pack and midfield at every opportunity - inevitably a try resulted which left The Rams the last 20 minutes to defend their line. To their dismay they lost the services of two key players Chris Forman and Muddy Waters as they were sin binned for offences that upset the referee. This was followed by Steve Unitt leaving the field of play and Will Dyche volunteering for duty in the front row that meant that the youngest and perhaps smallest front row faced up against the one of the largest the 3rds had come across. However the line was drawn and huge determination displayed by every member of the team as they thwarted attack after attack. Neil Griffiths, Jack Copeland and Dave Wells put bodies on the line to halt the transformed Bedworth 3rds as they sought an equalising try. The resultant win under such testing circumstances was very satisfying - congratulations to all who played. Team: Jack Copeland, Henry Mace, Steve Unitt, Neil Griffiths, Nick Holdsworth, Dave Wells, Chris Forman, Daryl Hunter, Will Dyche, Charlie Cox, Nick Briggs, Paul Horton, Carl Hamilton, Muddy Waters, Lee Williams, Will Howard, Chris Ransome

Saturday 24th October 2009

Shipston 3rds 17pts London Irish Vets 51pts

Shipston 3rds welcomed illustrious visitors London Irish Vets to Mayo Road on Saturday and had a great afternoon entertaining a very useful side. The game began with an interception try by the visitors that set the tone for the first half this was responded in turn by James Horton racing the length of the field to even the scores. Two further tries were shared by each side as Lee Williams pounced on an opportunity to score in the corner bringing the score to 12 each and the half time whistle with Shipston just perhaps shading the first half. With nothing to tell between the two teams the second half promised to be a tough encounter and indeed the restart proved to be the signal for the Irish to score a further try through their elusive midfield which again was answered by Muddy Waters scoring an excellent try in the corner. At 19-17 the game was poised to go the distance but sadly The Rams lost their shape and discipline and became victims of a determined onslaught by London Irish. Whilst the score does not correctly reflect the game the visitors were worthy winners and congratulations must go to the London Irish Vets especially Mike Hallam who collected four tries during the afternoon. The visitors enjoyed the Shipston hospitality and Andy Hallam's team departed as firm friends anxious to repeat the fixture in the future. Team: Mike Watkins, Ollie Newbury, Rees Gidley, Nick Holdsworth, Guy Loveridge Dave wells, Andy Cox, Tim Brendon, Charlie Cox, Tom, Paul Horton, James Horton, Lee Williams, Muddy waters, William Howard, Tom Salt, Josh Hunter

Saturday 17th October 2009

Manor Park 2nds 22pts Shipston 3rds 15pts

Never a good idea to take on a fixture straight after the club ball on a Saturday but that is what faced the 3rds as they travelled to Nuneaton to play a league fixture against a young looking Manor Park team. However this didn't put the team off producing an excellent opening spell as The Rams raced into a 10 nil lead with a score from Carl Hamilton and a penalty from William Howard. All seemed to be going extremely well as the opposition saved their line on several occasions with last ditched defence. The pack was in supreme form and in total control with the front row and debutant Graham Eastgate to the fore demolishing the opposition in the scrums and lineouts. Sadly an injury to Carl Hamilton robbed Shipston of a potent attacking force and the opposition clawed their way back into the game and secured a score that gave them a 10-7 deficit at half time. A further try and a penalty by the home side reversed control of the game as they soon took a 15 - 10 lead this was hauled back as the 3rds threw off their torpor and struck back with a well worked team score that saw William Howard scoring in the corner. At 15-15 the game turned on a defensive lapse that saw the speedy winger race away to score under the posts and Manor Park closed out the game 22-15 - whilst the younger Manor Park side enjoyed their good fortune The Rams were left to reflect how they managed to lose control of a game that they should have won. Greater tests lie ahead. Team: Graham Eastgate, Steve Unitt, Mark Ashworth, Nick Holdsworth, Fraser Farrell, Dave Wells, Chris Forman, Daryl Hunter, Tim Brendon, Charlie Cox, Nick Briggs, Paul Horton, Carl Hamilton, Lee Williams, Muddy Waters, William Howard, Tom Salt

Saturday 10th October 2009

Shipston on Stour 3rds 44 pts Old Coventrians 3rds 0 pts

Mayo Road was the venue for The Rams second league game this season and saw the thirds in a determined mood to get their first Warwickshire League points. The game started with The Rams applying all the pressure and after some ball juggling in the centre of the park by Paul Horton a gap was created for the sharp Carl Hamilton to burst through and feed William Howard for an early score. A penalty kick continued the scoring for Shipston, and a superb 20 minute period of Shipston forward domination followed. Any loose ball was snaffled up by the back row with Daryl Hunter to the fore and he was justly rewarded with a close quarter score as he forced his way over to keep the scoring ticking along. Martin Goodman appeared to be everywhere as he took the opportunity to pick up a couple of well earned scores as the forwards continued their out muscling of their larger opponents. Making his debut for the 3rds was Frazer Farrell in the second row and his contribution was much appreciated by the rest of the team. Mention must be made of Charlie Cox who had a trademark thoroughly competitive game at scrum half as he harried his opposite number all afternoon and caught him in possession on several occasions. Half time saw the score at 32 - 0 in The Rams favour and whilst Old Coventrians took the opportunity to come back at the home side the defence stood firm and good covering tackling by the backs snuffed out any hope that the opposition had of getting on the score board Muddy Waters being especially brave in the tackle to stop the line being breached. Carl Hamilton in the backs proved to be a constant threat to the opposition with well timed runs and his reward came with two excellent tries as he proved too strong for the tiring Old Coventrians defence. With conversions adding to the score the end result was an extremely satisfying 44 - 0 victory Mike Watkins, Steve Unitt, Martin Goodman, Nick Holdsworth, Fraser Farrell, Daryl Hunter, Tim Brendon, Andy Cox, Chris Forman, Charlie Cox, Nick Briggs, Paul Horton, Carl Hamilton, Lee Williams, William Howard, Stuart Wood, Muddy Waters

Saturday 3rd October 2009

Shipston 3rds 49pts Chipping Norton 0pts

Shipston 3rds gathered on Saturday in a determined mood to continue the good work started 2 weeks ago at Witney. The opposition though needed a boost in terms of players which Shipston volunteered in the best traditions of the game. Rob Hawkins and John Alexander stepped up to the plate followed by Neil Griffiths and skipper Paul Horton who were late arrivals to the party. Consequently this report has a different flavour to it as it comes from a different perspective after being on the receiving end of a thoroughly convincing Rams performance. The 3rds demonstrated an almost professional approach to the game as they did not allow the visitors to settle and quickly scored through Dave Graham and William Howard with a penalty. A disjointed response from Chipping Norton allowed the 3rds to dominate the entire game and attacks were mounted with great success - a feature of the Rams play was their ability to attack in waves with options of support right across the team. Further scores came from Steve Unitt who made a useful front row contribution for the second week, Charlie Cox an opportunists try at the base of the scrum, Chris Forman a typical wing forward supporting role, Dave Graham ever eager to sniff out a scoring opportunity, Carl Hamilton with his first for the season after strong support running in the centres and Nick Briggs in great form at fly half. William Howard also looked dangerous at full back and finished off a strong move by beating a couple of defenders by stepping inside them. With the range of scorers bearing witness to the teams ability to attack from all quarters. Mention must be made of debutant to the thirds, Martin Goodman who made an impact from the front row as he willingly got stuck into the opposition. The final score was 49-0 with the skipper being grateful for an early finish to the game and deciding its not much "fun" playing against your own team when they are so dominant - but much heartened by the Rams style and commitment to the game. Team: Steve Unitt, Mike Watkins, Martin Goodman, Nasty Nick Holdsworth, Wixey, Andy Cox, Tim Brendon, Chris Forman, Charlie Cox, Nick Briggs, Carl Hamilton, Dave Graham, Lee Williams, Muddy Waters, William Howard, John Alexander, Rob Hawkins, Neil Griffiths and Paul Horton

Saturday 19th September 2009

Witney 3rds 5pts Shipston on Stour 3rds 26 pts

The thirds travelled to Witney on Saturday to play one of the few teams that defeated them last season. The ground was unforgiving but it didn't stop The Rams making a bright start as they got stuck into their opponents up front and soon established that they had the measure of their opponents. With a new front row that was hastily put together before the game of Steve Unitt, Lee Buckle, and Ollie Newbury the fear was that pressure would be hard to resist in this area but the opposite occurred and throughout the afternoon Witney found themselves being outmanoeuvred in the set pieces. Other new boys to the squad included veteran Dave Wells who made an excellent contribution to the afternoon and Tom Lindlar who proved to be a valuable impact substitute when he came on to make late surging runs at a tiring opposition. Surprisingly the first score came from an intercepted pass that gave Witney a 5-0 lead. Shipston's response was to launch Lee Williams down the wing where after a fine run he managed to score in the corner. Points were hard to come by so The Rams resorted to William Howard's kicking skills as he gave Shipston a lead with a penalty that was followed by a slicing run from another 3rd team debutant Dave Graham as he gave The Rams a vital half time lead with a try on the stroke of half time. The Rams redoubled their efforts and knew that the score after half time was going to be vital so once again they relied on two well taken penalty kicks from Will Howard. There then followed a period of intense pressure from Witney where the defence from Shipston was magnificent as collectively they refused to let the line be crossed. Ever alert to the breakaway possibility The Rams in support of Dave Graham scored through Nick Briggs who was on hand to take the scoring pass and the final score of the game to make a thoroughly deserved 26-5 victory. Team: Lee Buckle, Ollie Newbury, Steve Unitt, Dave Wells, Nick Holdsworth, Tom Lindlar, Chris Forman, Tim Brendon, Andy Cox, Charlie Cox, Nick Briggs, Paul Horton, Dave Graham, Muddy waters, Lee Williams, Will Howard.

Saturday 12th September 2009

Shipston on Stour 3rds 10 pts Leamington 32pts

Shipston 3rds decision to join a Warwickshire league this season meant that their first game was against a strong Leamington squad that visited Mayo Road. The game started brightly enough with the Rams causing problems for the opposition that resulted in a trade mark opening move that saw Lee Williams taking the opportunity to score in the corner. Rampaging runs from Mark Ashworth and fine smuggling work from Andy Cox were the highlights of the opening half. However despite a strong showing the home side turned around at half time with an 8-5 deficit. The belief in the Rams was still very much for a win, but Leamington had a different agenda that saw further scores that gave a 20 - 5 deficit, this was partially rectified by a score in the corner from the alert winger Muddy Waters - this however proved to be a temporary respite as Leamington capitalised on their well prepared squad to add two further tries at the death to run out 32 -10 winners. The heat seemed to take its toll on the Rams who did not have the luxury of a large squad on the touchline to replace the tiring forwards- the exception being the inclusion of Wixey with a heavily strapped thumb and a wrench sticking out of it from an earlier wrestling match with a tyre his appearance did lift the spirits briefly. Shipston know that improvements will need to be made during the season but the team are capable of taking heart from the defeat against a well deserved win from Leamington.