

Wimbledon hammer Ironsides for the perfect start

Wimbledon RFC (31) 57

Tries: Harvey (4), Will (3), Hector, Dan Cons: Dan 5, Carter 1

Battersea Ironsides B (0) 0

It has been a long time coming but the season finally started with Wimbledon securing a convincing home victory to Battersea in Round 1 of the U13 Surrey League, Division 3.

The home side had failed to beat Ironsides when they met last season, but were in total control this time round as their opponents suffered the heaviest defeat of the opening day, with every player contributing to the victory.

Battersea kicked off and after an early exchange of possession Wimbledon took charge when Harvey went over for the first score after just 5 minutes.

The Wimbledon forwards secured the ball, moving up-field and keeping Battersea on the back foot. Quick ball from a ruck just inside their opponents 22 and 5 meters in from the near touchline, saw some exceptional midfield running and passing with the ball going all the way across the field to where Jude and Harvey had a two man overlap, with the winger touching down in the corner.

The kickers were facing a gusty wind and Dan narrowly missed the extras, pushing his kick to the left of the posts.

It was only a few minutes before Harvey scored again in what would prove to be a very profitable morning. More good work from Oliver and Ralph released Wimbledon's backs who, with some pin-point passing and Jude again coming into the line, put the speeding Harvey into the corner for his second. This time Dan made no mistake with his kick to give them a 12-point lead.

As you'd expect, Battersea responded strongly with some strong forward play, getting into the home sides 22, but Wimbledon were keeping their London opponents at bay. Gabriel and Titus, the two flankers, were making life difficult for Battersea, closing down their space and securing some good turnover ball. But despite the dominance of the home sides pack, Battersea kept asking questions of their defence, forcing Wimbledon to hold fast and clear from their own line.

The support play of the Wimbledon forwards was inspired. Another solid ruck allowed the boys to move the ball out wide, only for the final pass to go astray. The referee judged the ball went backwards where it was expertly scooped up on the run by Freddie Hawkins, supported by Oscar, to keep the move alive before popping a neat inside pass to Hector to drive forward.

On 17 minutes, Wimbledon were rewarded for all their possession with a third try coming from a great solo effort from Will, handing off several defenders before cutting in and touching down under the posts. Dan added the conversion for 19-0.

There was to be no let up for Battersea with Charlie Arthur catching the ball from the restart and taking it right back to the halfway line with a strong drive and maul. The bonus point was secured 2 minutes later when Harvey went over for his hat-trick. And shortly after that, the winger's morning was complete when another good period of possession from the forwards allowed him to cross for his fourth. Dan secured the extras with two more conversions to go in at half time with a commanding 31-0 lead.

The discipline was just as impressive, with 19 tackles made and only 1 penalty conceded.

The second half started where the first left off with the Wimbledon pack in domineering mood. Sachin and Sam were controlling the breakdown well, and strong rucking from Foxy, and Ryan was keeping Battersea locked in their own half for long periods.

The changes were proving to be seamless, with Carter slotting in at both Centre and at Fly Half and keeping the momentum going. A couple of good runs by Jack on the right wing forced a lineout, where a good steel and some well worked forward play allowed Hector to go on a driving run, taking several defenders with him before stretching out and touching the whitewash for Wimbledon's fifth. Dan slotted a difficult conversion from the touchline before going on a jinking run of his own to squeeze between two defenders and score by the posts. The extras made it 45-0.

A strong run by Leo to break out of his own 22 resulted in a crunching collision, with the Battersea player being checked for concussion. Although Ironsides were concerned, the referee saw no malicious intent – it was simply another demonstration of this team's running power.

Credit to Battersea who again came at Wimbledon, but some resolute defence and a well-timed tackle from Sam Groves on at fullback meant

that the home side were able to keep the visitors from taking anything from the game.

Only 5 minutes remained but Will added two more tries with powerful runs to complete his hat-trick. Carter kicked the final points and the match ended with a comprehensive 57-0 victory for Wimbledon and a perfect start to their new season.

Wimbledon

Jude, Oscar, Will, Leo, Harvey, Dan, Sachin, Freddie H, Foxy, Ralph, Oliver, Ryan, Gabriel, Titus, Hector

Replacements: Charlie A, Sam V, Carter, Sam G, Jack W