

Beccahamians RFC 28 v's Crowborough RFC 10

Crowborough crashed to their third consecutive defeat of the season on Saturday , in spite of being in control for most of the first half. From the whistle the pack took the game to Beccs, picking and driving and for the first ten minutes totally denying Beccs any meaningful ball.

The first points went to Crowborough when Palmer slotted a penalty after a deliberate knock on that brought a promising backs attack to a halt.0-3

From a loose kick forward and what was practically their first touch of the ball, the Beccahamians full back fielded close to his own 22, and with a swift silky smooth run, avoided several half hearted attempted tackles, to put the ball down under the posts for a converted try 7-3.

Beccahamians drew inspiration from this , and immediately took the return kick into a driving maul moving the ball 20 metres down field. However Crowborough were able to get a hand on the ball and Brooker put his backs away to take the ball deep into the Beccahamians half before the move was halted, but with forwards and backs working in concert, possession was retained with Withers feeding Brooker who missed both centres to Jackson on the burst, who drew his man to feed Palmer who stepped inside the cover to score wide out on the right. Palmer converted his own score 7-10

The remainder of the half saw 'boro's forward defence put under pressure as Beccs tried to go into the break in the lead. Several attempts to get over the 'boro line were stopped by a determined pack who were able to secure ball for Brooker to clear. Two penalty opportunities, to go further ahead, narrowly missed, and Crowborough reached half time just 3 points in front, having had the majority of the usable ball, and with the pack in particular putting in a collectively good performance.

The second half saw the emergence of a different Crowborough side, whose shape and discipline was a mere shadow of that of the first half. With Pass yellow carded and 'boro down to 14 men, a series of long ranging kicks were traded by both fly halves, that eventually saw 'boro miss field the catch wide on the left, and as 'boro over-committed men into the loose to secure the ball, the ball popped out on the Beccs side and with a three man overlap the try was inevitable, although the conversion was pushed wide.12-10.

Still with 14 men, Crowborough went further behind, when after Beccs were awarded a penalty for holding onto the ball in the ruck, they kicked into the corner, but from the lineout 'boro resisted the Beccs attempts to go over the line through seven phases of play, and when the referee eventually awarded a penalty to Beccs, for handling in the ruck, they had no hesitation in going for the posts to take the score to 15-10.

Crowborough had an opportunity to narrow the deficit to 2 points with a penalty 22 metres out , but the kick went agonisingly wide.

As frustration set in, so the Crowborough shape and discipline deteriorated , and when 'boro were penalised for handling in the ruck for the umpteenth time, the Beccs fly half duly punished them with a long range penalty 18-10

With Crowborough temporarily back to 15 men , Crowborough won a scrum on the half way line and the subsequent box kick was sliced into the grateful arms of the Beccahamians full back who , just as he had in the first half, but from further back in his own 22, proceeded to swerve away from attempted tackles; cut inside covering players; to score a brilliant try which was converted to take the score to 25-10.

With 'boro again reduced to 14 men, as Martyn took a ten minute yellow card break, in a possible case of mistaken identity, the 'Boro backs had several opportunities to get back onto the score board except for the collective catching and passing amnesia. Beccahamians finished the game off with a final penalty to take the score to 28-10.

If Crowborough had continued the second half as they played the first, then they could have won this game. However it is no coincidence that the three lost matches this season have been accompanied with five yellow cards. It is essential that players resist the temptation to retaliate to cynical intimidation, and let their play do the talking for them.

There is now a three week gap to get things right before the next home match against Charlton Park, a must win match.