

## **Bromley RFC 1<sup>st</sup> XV 28 v's Crowborough RFC 1<sup>st</sup> XV 13**

**It had been three weeks since Crowborough had played or trained as a squad, and frankly, it looked like it.**

**However, even with several players still on vacation, and others playing out of position, it was Crowborough who started the better of the two sides, recording a penalty within the first five minutes, followed with twenty minutes gone, by a well executed forwards inspired try, that saw the lighter 'boro pack, drive a rolling maul fifteen metres towards and over the Bromley line, with Hayes coming up from the bottom of the pile to claim the try which Palmer converted. 0-10**

**This was the time to increase the pressure and make the chase that bit more difficult. But as in several recent matches 'Boro allowed Bromley to take the initiative from the restart, and when a 'Boro player was judged to have come in from the side of a maul, Bromley had the chance to reduce the arrears from in front of the posts, but the full back's kick hit the post and the pressure was temporarily relieved by a spiralling clearance from Brooker. From the line out Bromley won the ball and a swift transfer saw the full back, at speed, enter the line at an exquisite angle, take the inside pas from the outside centre, and with consummate ease evade several half hearted tackled to go around and score a sublime try under the posts which he converted. 7-10**

**Crowborough had an immediate chance to go further ahead through and excellent break by Walters, that saw him sprint fully fifty metres before being brought down five metres short of the line. With the support trailing in his wake, and with three defenders trying to win the ball, , the resultant penalty for holding on, was a foregone conclusion, and Bromley were allowed to clear their line once more.**

**Crowborough's discipline and adherence to the laws has been somewhat variable this season, with infringing at the line of scrumage and coming in from the side of the maul, being the major source of avoidable penalties, and as Bromley moved into the boro half so the referee judged 'boro guilty of the former, allowing Bromley to put the ball deep into the 'Boro 22.**

**From the line out Bromley provide their backs with practically an uncontested ball, and in a deja vue moment, the #15 again entered**

**the line from blind to open at such devastating speed that he, bisected the centres and outstripped the remaining cover to score out wide. The conversion was missed and score stayed at 12-10.**

**With half time approaching Crowborough were awarded a penalty some thirty metres out which palmer converted to go into the break with a narrow one point lead. 12-13.**

**From the re-start whistle and with the slope and wind in their favour, Bromley emerged as a different side. Using their large forwards to best effect they drove into the tackles setting up a series of drives that provided clean controlled ball, and as the ball was moved down the backs, and with the full back running a dummy line inside, the inside centre saw the space created out wide and put in a delightful chip into the corner that the right wing was able to fall on unchallenged in the corner. The try went unconverted 17-13.**

**Bromley were now in the ascendancy, and on the beneficial end of a litany of mysterious, and incomprehensible decisions that frustrated not only an incredulous Crowborough team, but astounded both sets of supporters. Several 'boro players were determined to get back on terms, but committed the cardinal sin of taking the ball on a charging run, but isolating themselves as they out ran the support. As a result, in this season of goodwill and generosity, instead of creating an attacking platform, the ball was handed over to a grateful Bromley side enabling them to use the wind to keep 'Boro camped deeply in their own half.**

**From yet another penalty, the ball was put just 10 metres from the 'Boro line, and although Bromley won the line out, the initial drive was well held up. But as the maul was driven to the touchline, the Bromley #9 broke infield, and popped the ball up to the right wing to crash over for the try that went unconverted. 22-13**

**With so many penalties awarded it is surprising that no yellow cards were awarded to either side, and the only "red card" was shown to a vocal supporter who was asked to leave the touch line! As the sorry spectacle came to a merciful close, two more penalties were inexplicably awarded to Bromley, and duly converted to take the final score to 28-13.**

**This was not the start that Crowborough would have wanted for the New Year, but if there are any lessons to be learnt, then clearly three**

**weeks of total inactivity is probably not the best preparation for a top of the table league game, and that a return to friendly matches in vacant weeks could be used to maintain match fitness; iron out inconsistencies of law interpretation; introduce development players, and regain that cohesive team approach so characteristic of the first half of the season.**

**Crowborough's next outing is in two weeks time 19<sup>th</sup> Jan v's Folkestone at Steel Cross.**