

## **Stafford 12-20 Dixonians**

*4<sup>th</sup> April 2009*

*Midlands West 3 (NORTH) League Result*

Stafford's losing streak continued as their 1st XV were defeated by Dixonians in their penultimate Midlands West (North) 3 fixture. Stafford came into the match confident of putting an end to a run of three successive losses, having beaten the same team back in December. The Newport Road side have hit a bad run of form and this was clear from the start as they started with uncertainty in both attack and defence. It wasn't long before Dixonians exploited a weakness in Stafford's back line and cut inside to score their first try. The visitors were seeing less of the ball, but were making far more of it as a similar play soon after stretched their lead to 12-0. Stafford then mounted a resurgence as the half drew to a close but lacked ideas in their opponents twenty-two when it came to claiming the try. In the final play, with a penalty close to the line, Stafford took a scrum and the forwards lay a platform for Peter Cooke to power over and take the score to 12-7. The half-time team talk from coach Graham Macdonald emphasised the importance of his forwards getting to the break down enabling the backs to have quicker service. The second half began similar to the first, with Stafford having plenty of possession but Dixonians making more of their chances. This was proved again as the visiting backs ran through some limp tackling for their third try. Stafford then forced their way up the pitch and found the quick ball their coach, Graham Macdonald wanted. The move saw Tom Smith drive to the line, before popping up to Tom Leese to finish off and bring Stafford back to 17-12. Having played nowhere near their best, the home side looked like they had stolen victory when Jonny Duncan intercepted a Dixonians pass to go clean through, but the play was brought back due to an offence. Stafford were in with a chance of the win all the way until the final moments, when Dixonians kicked the penalty that put them out of reach and gave them a 20-12 victory. After another humbling loss, Macdonald warned his side that a repeat performance in the next game – a County Cup Final against Longton - could see them be beaten by a much greater margin.

## **Handsworth 51-7 Stafford 3<sup>rd</sup> XV**

*4<sup>th</sup> April 2009*

*Staffordshire Merit Table B South*

## ***No Report.***

Stafford XV are in the Staffordshire Senior Cup Final at Burntwood RUFC against Longton on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> April 2009 whilst Development XV also travel to Bloxwich.