

### **Leek 3-36 Stafford Development XV**

*13<sup>th</sup> December 2008*

Staffordshire 2<sup>nd</sup> Team League Result

Stafford's Development XV traveled to Leek and ran out convincing 36 – 3 winners. The game started with Leek using the slope to their advantage and within 10 minutes were up by three points when Stafford infringed at a ruck and the fly half confidently struck the ball through the up rights. From the restart Stafford began to impose themselves on the match and played at a quick tempo and from some good work from forwards and backs the ball was slipped to Richard Whatling, who powered his way over the line. Tim Woolman adding the conversion. The rest of the half played out the same with Stafford dominating possession and territory but were guilty of wasting opportunities in the last third of the pitch, so the game remained 7-3 at the half.

Stafford came out for the second half determined not to waste any more chances and were instantly rewarded when Prop Matt Cooper made a break for the line but when he was help up short, the forwards started a driving maul that saw Rich Walklate squeeze over the white paint, Woolman again adding the extra two. Stafford were now beginning to cut loose with incisive handling and running angles leaving the Leek defence grasping at shadows. Some quick recycling saw the ball moved wide to James Goodfellow who shrugged off two defenders to go under the posts and Woolman again striking the conversion well. With Leeks confidence dwindling Stafford took control of the game and from the back of the ruck scrum half and captain Vinny Hogan ran wide then slipped a perfect inside ball for No8, Andrew Carter to fly through the gap for an unconverted score. Minutes later again from some mesmerizing interplay between forwards and backs, Hogan sniped down the blind side to draw in the defence before releasing lock Dave Austin for another score. Woolman this time unlucky to see his conversion come back of the post. With only ten minutes left, Stafford found themselves down to 14 men due to injuries and Leek saw the opportunity for a consolation score, but Stafford's mean defence would not give an inch and from turnover ball inside their own 22, Goodfellow raced eighty metres for his second to seal an impressive victory that will keep the first team players looking over their shoulders.

### **Stafford 3<sup>rd</sup> XV 22-0 Leek**

*13<sup>th</sup> December 2008*

Friendly Result

The 3rds game had to be played at St Leonards Riverway ground due to the heavy overnight rain making their Newport Road pitch unplayable. The move did little put off the home side as they gave a demonstration of how a team should function. The game started with Leek putting Stafford under intense pressure for the first ten minutes but the home team held firm, displaying excellent defensive skills. They then went on the offensive, on the back of a solid scrummaging performance, and took the fight to the visitors. Jez Barber opened the scoring, picking up from the back of a scrum to power over in the corner. His second came soon after with an identical move and his power and pace caused Leek problems all afternoon. The third try came after an excellent break by debutant Dan Smith, who had an outstanding game. Tackled short of the line he off loaded to Barber who passed to Jez Price for the Captain to beat the last defender to go over. The final try went to Ben Richards who used pace and agility to dance past the opposition to put down under the posts. That was the first half, 22-0 up and expectations of more to come. Although highly entertaining the second half passed with no further score, a little white line fever manifested itself and Leek stepped up their defence to hold out Stafford. Finally a big thank you to all at St Leonards Rugby Club, without their help no game would have been possible.

Stafford play hosts to bottom of the league Wednesbury next Saturday (20<sup>th</sup> December 2008), 3rds host whilst Vets travel to Spartans (Midlands) and Colts travel to Willenhall. Stafford Rugby Club

have their Christmas Party in the evening with a Karaoke, Curry & Casa Night with Karaoke starting at 7:30pm. Stafford look forward to returning to St Leonards on Boxing Day for the annual fundraiser charity match for John Perry. KO 11am.