

THORNTON CLEVELEYS RUFC NEWSLETTER

January 2022



95th Anniversary

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

MEMBERSHIP

Membership is now due for all players & social members.

Membership Fees are as follows:

PLAYER: £95

STUDENT: £60

SOCIAL: £40

SUPPORTER: £20

WALKING RUGBY

Walking Rugby is now being held for all members at 6.30pm every Thursday down at Thornton YMCA. It's an excellent way to keep fit and catch up with old mates. Contact Terry Ryan for more info.

FIXTURES AND RESULTS

	8 th January 2022:	Tyldesley (Home)	Postponed (Wet)
	15 th January 2022:	Garstang (Away)	23 – 13 (Loss)
	22 nd January 2022:	Littleborough (Home)	10 – 32 (Loss)
	29 th January 2022:	Ellesmere Port (Away)	14 – 26 (Win)



1st XV in the changing rooms following their first win since the return fixture in October

Other News

As many of you will be aware, 2022 marks the 95th Anniversary of TCRUFC's creation. The club's initial inception was during September all those years ago in 1927 and so, while it isn't the "Official 95th Season", we are in the 95th Calendar Year of TCRUFC and we would encourage any and all involved with the club to be proud of how we have succeeded, failed, adapted, thrived and survived over the years. With a strong heartbeat of members, supporters, and players past and present, the ideology of quality, social rugby lives on through the hard work of our forefathers and the stories of folklore passed down the generations – usually by the Gorrie's and the Hesketh's. Please take some time to remember fondly, those who came before us and ensured that we still have access to the game we love, whilst keeping one eye on the 2022-23 season for plenty of celebrations and events. If you have any memories or stories you would like to mention over the year, please send your suggestions to tcrufc.grant@gmail.com

200 CLUB - JANUARY

£30 – V. Doyle

£20 – M. Pearson

£10 – P. Lewis

Please can all winners make themselves known to JJ McKinnon ASAP – 07701 367287

Ellesmere Port Match Report

After a poor run of form, TC headed on the long trip down to Ellesmere Port in what was The Larks next opportunity to pick up a win since the return fixture in October of last year, marking 10 match weekends without a victory due to losses, postponements and a draw.

Upon first impressions of The Whitby Sports and Social Club, it was excellent to see a big, flat and relatively firm pitch for the back end of January. The sun was shining with a smattering of clouds whizzing across the sky as gale force winds whipped the west coast, tunneled down the River Mersey and seemingly straight across the width of the pitch. Kicking, lineouts and even a poorly delivered short pass would struggle unless perfectly spiralled to negate the ferocity of the wind, with the only saving grace being that it looked likely to remain dry for the duration. Head Coach, Steve Woodburn, named a strong 20-man squad with Tom Cockcroft returning into the 2nd Row and in-form winger Aaron Hargreaves retaining the starting 14 shirt.

Straight from the get-go it was clear to see the distinct playing styles of both teams. Ellesmere Port with big hard carries around the ruck from their forwards and then jiggery-pokery from their 10 with good dummy lines to keep the TC backline guessing. TC ran their shape with great effect constantly changing the point of attack and bringing the big carries of Joe Crompton, Matt Ellis and Tom Cockcroft into the battle, shortening their long passing game due to the weather and using Ellis Wolstencroft and Jack McFarlane to bang on the door. After a cagey opening 10 minutes, both teams began to pick holes, Ellesmere Port in the wider channels where if were not for Jack Wills' sterling defence and cover, TC could have been in trouble a few times. As the hosts tried around the edge, TC battered it up the middle through multiple line breaks from Cockcroft and Ellis again. Fly Half Kurt Gledhill soon realised the hosts were fronting up tightly to negate the effectiveness of the TC pack and so, with a flick of the wrist, put the backs away round the outside with Full Back Jonny Taylor putting on the burners to leave the trailing defence in his dust. Hargreaves added the extras. **EP 0 – 7 TC**

TC began to assert themselves and grow into the game. Totemic defence by Jordan Fairlie at 6 stopped the big Ellesmere Port carriers in their tracks with Pete Ashton feeding off scraps, pilfering the ball and being a general nuisance. As has been a feature this season, the TC scrum was dominant again. Matthew "Bob" Robinson and Aaron "Airzy" Farnworth putting the squeeze on in attack and unsettling their oppo's in defence to make scrum half Jack Smith's life that little bit easier than of late and allowing him to do what he does best – provide quick ball. After a solid set piece and a few good phases of structured play, the defence was disorganised and the attack was just the opposite. Another flick of Gledhills wrists saw in-form winger, Aaron Hargreaves dive over after running a perfect support line and converting his own try. **EP 0 – 14 TC**

Ellesmere Port continued to probe and prod for all their worth and eventually caught TC napping on the brink of half time with quick handling to round the backline and flop over in the corner. Every credit to the kicker who slotted the conversion from the touchline, into the wind, to be back within a score at the half time whistle. **EP 7 - 14 TC – HALF TIME**

TC began the 2nd Half full of confidence and clear instructions from the Coach saw Smith box-kicking clever and putting the onus on the hosts to wrestle the lead back from TC. This tactic, coupled with the endless workrate of Will Gardner and Co. saw Ellesmere Port being harrassed and harried to crippling point. What seemed like hours of ball carrying from the hosts came to no avail and it appeared they'd punched themselves out to the point where turnover ball for TC, meant it was go time. Short, hard lines in and around the breakdown from the usual suspects, against a gassed defence soon saw Cockcroft make another trademark line break and streak clear from 40 metres out to dot down under the posts. Hargreaves added the 2. **EP 7 – 21 TC**

With the hosts on the ropes and them picking up injuries left right and centre, TC began to expand their game and send the big runners up the midfield, with good forwards handling stretching and pulling the EP defence far and wide until, in a flash, Captain Matt Ellis cut back short to expose the overchasing defence and galloped home from the half way line. Hargreaves landed the extras. **EP 7 – 28 TC**

With around 15 minutes remaining, the bench was emptied and said subs were soon at the coalface, under a team warning from the referee. Luke Bennett fronted up on the goal line to keep out a certain try with a mammoth shot, only for JJ McKinnon to go off feet and be sent to the bin for team offences after a 5 minute cameo. The pressure increased and with the pack a man down, it was only a matter of time before the hosts breached to line from close in. **EP 14 – 28 TC**

Ellesmere Port, galvanised by their score and 1 man advantage picked up the kitchen sink and came back with a newfound bite. Running extra hard and on the back of quick ball, the TC line scrambled well and great defence from Tom Gardner and Henri Hesketh saw to it that the hosts wouldn't go round the outside, while Andy Williams and Jord Fairlie shut up shop in the midfield. Eventually though, the class shone through and a consistent, unified and disciplined TC defence managed to grip the game by the scruff of the neck and close out the last 5 minutes on top.

A special mention has to go to the referee on the day. 80 minutes of clear, concise and fair decision making allowed the game to flow like what we see on TV (even if he did get the score wrong!).

FULL TIME

Ellesmere Port 14 – 28 TC

Finally...

SAVE THE DATE

TCRUFC End of Season Summer Ball

21st May 2022

More details to follow soon.

