

Ross 2nd XI v Newent 'B'

Stats

Date	For	Against	Venue	Fixture	SHM MOTM
10/01/09	1	4	home	league	Richard Stewart

Scorers

Name	Tony Faulkner
Goals	1

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Oversized Christmas portions take their toll

In the 37 years that this reporter has been covering the Ross Men's Hockey teams, it has been rare that a team that so dominated a game have finished such heavy losers, much to the often vocal disappointment of the large crowd this game attracted, as they watched Ross Men's 2nd XI Vs Newent B.

This re-played match, the result of some creative substitution tactics by Ross when these two teams met in early December, was played in cold conditions on a newly laid pitch more resembling Weston-Super-Mare's beach than a playing field for such highly tuned athletes. However, despite the long Christmas lay-off, Ross set about their opponents with gusto, displaying for all to see their displeasure at having to play a match they had previously won.

In these early exchanges it was the running of James Brown and Richard Stewart that caught the eye, as Ross pushed forward in wave after wave of attack. Some neat work by Matt Saunders and Richard Harbottle was the pick of the early exchanges, seeing a defensive clearance develop into a quick flowing counter attack, resulting in a shot from the aforementioned Brown going just wide of the post.

It was, however, Newent who took the lead with a well worked and powerfully struck short corner routine just after 10 minutes. This though had the affect of angering the home team and again, confident in the protection the very able defence of Tim Jones, David Skyrme, Tony Faulkner and the diminutive Ed Peck were giving them; James Adamson drove his team forward time after time. The results of this pressure though were disappointing, with a number of short corners being wasted and other numerous shots at goal either failing to hit the target or being saved by Newent's increasingly busy keeper.

The crowd were growing ugly(er) and their thirst for blood was only sated when Tony Faulkner stepped up and took charge of a short corner, scoring from a mesmerising run, before then unleashing a shot of unstoppable power. This score saw the teams go into half time level and with Ross obviously buoyed by their first half exploits. However, I fear it was then that wheels started to come off as members of the crowd, some of whom told us they played a little themselves, tried to offer advice and tactics to the home team – and you could tell that as they took to the field once more, the home team were burdened with thoughts of tactics and strategies the likes of which they had not been forced to consider before and making them double guess themselves. During this second half Geraint Morris and Gareth

Bowen played a much larger part, trying to work things more from the mid-field, however the two stand-out players remained James Brown who ran all afternoon for his team, and the impressive Richard Stewart playing his best game for his team and rendering the crowd speechless at times with his powerful running and seasoned distribution on the right wing.

However, all the good work of the first half, and the wasted chances in front of goal came back to haunt Ross as Newent scored early in the second half, again from a very neat shot. As Ross push forward again and again to seek the equaliser, Newent broke once more to score round the impressive Seb Sullivan in goal. At 1-3 down the heads began to drop and in the case of Tim Jones, his shoulder also as he was yellow carded for a late and some may say ugly tackle on a Newent attacker as he was bearing down on goal. The resulting penalty flick saw the game end in a 1-4 win for Newent, who delighted in their revenge and a despondent Ross team, licking their wounds and wondering how they threw away a game in which they promised so much.

As ever thanks should go to the two umpires, John Setchfiled and Pete Hughes, with the Hereford Motorcaravans Man of Match Award going to the very impressive Richard Stewart.