**Hertfordshire Rugby Football Union**

**Press Notice**

**Herts March on to Twickenham Final**

**Dorset & Wilts 13 Hertfordshire 40**

Hertfordshire reached the Division 3 final of the Bill Beaumont Senior Mens County Championship by beating Dorset & Wilts at Chippenham RFC last Saturday. They will meet Leicestershire at Twickenham on Sunday, June 22nd, kick off 1.00pm

The conditions in Chippenham were in complete contrast to the heat at Harlow the previous week, the match commencing in torrential rain which only eased by half time. Consequently attempts at free flowing rugby were hampered by a wet ball and consequent handling errors by both sides.

Dorset & Wilts also offered the strongest opposition so far in the competition, competing more robustly in the forwards and providing sterner defence overall. However the Herts pack soon took charge of the scrums and had the better of the linesout. Although there was much scrappy ball in the loose in the first half, as the game went on and conditions improved, the quicker Herts forwards forced the home side to concede a number of penalties at the breakdown.

Try scoring opportunities were at a premium in the wet but the Herts backs took their chances late in the first half and were able to return to their running form in the second.

It was a very pragmatic opening to the match, with both sides electing to kick for goal when penalties were awarded within range. Herts opened the scoring with a Kyle Lemon (Hertford) penalty from 30 metres out within 2 minutes. He followed up with another 14 minutes in after a period of Herts pressure.

The home side soon responded and twice forced the Herts defence to concede penalties, which their scrum half kicked to level the score. Handling errors continued, but it was Herts who scored next via another Lemon penalty.

Then on the half hour Herts almost scored the first try, as wing Kaz Henderson (Letchworth) broke from his 22 and sprinted the length of the field only to be forced into touch 5 metres out. However 5 minutes later Herts drove over the line from a 5 metre scrum, No 8 Tom Lewis (Letchworth) touching down and Lemon adding the conversion. Just before half time Henderson took his second chance for a try, touching down following good passing from an attacking line out. The visitors were 21-6 up at the whistle.

Within minutes of the restart Herts extended their lead when Josh Rudling (Hertford) seized the ball in broken play inside his half and sprinted away from the defence to touch down under the posts, Lemon adding the conversion. Herts kept up the pressure and scored again after winning a scrum 15 metres out, running the ball and then driving prop Karl Garside (Cheshunt) over in the left hand corner.

Midway through the half the home side won an attacking lineout and drove over for a converted try. But the visitors had the last word via a try under the post by replacement wing Matt Shaw (Harpenden), which was converted by Iwan Dawes.

So, by the final whistle almost normal service had been resumed by Herts and they were comfortable winners by 40 points to 13.

Scorers

Hertfordshire: Tries: Lewis (37m), Henderson (40m), Rudling (44m), Garside (55m), Shaw (70m) - Conversions: Lemon (37m, 44m), Dawes (70m) – Penalties: Lemon (1m, 14m, 25m)

Hertfordshire:

Johnno Wicks (Cheshunt); Josh Rudling (Hertford), Will Titherington (Letchworth), Richard Streets (Letchworth}, Kaz Henderson (Letchworth); Kyle Lemon ( Hertford), Richard Beeny (Huel Tring).

Nick Brown (Huel Tring), Steffan Jones (Hertford) (Capt), ⁠Karl Garside (Cheshunt), Ollie Lacey (Harpenden), Josh Walker (Letchworth), Harry McCartney (Huel Tring), Tremaine Fry (Hertford), Tom Lewis (Letchworth)

Replacements (all used)

Will McKenna (London Welsh), ⁠Conor Turner (Letchworth), Adam Greene (Cheshunt), Liam Fitts (Letchworth), Luke Mongston (Letchworth), Matt Shaw (Harpenden), Iwan Dawes, Ben Gilchrist (Hertford)