

## Shevington Sharks U11's vs Clock Face Miners U11's – Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> June 2018

### A Very Happy Fathers Day

From the Sharks Boys!

Thankfully a slightly cooler Sunday morning for Fathers Day 2018 as the Sharks U11's welcomed Clock Face from St Helens as the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the season got underway & all the fixtures are reversed in the same order as the first half, the Sharks suffered a narrow defeat in the away fixture so there was a bit of reckoning to be done to square things up & the lads were told to dedicate this to all the Dads attending, & Grandads, can't forget them.

The Sharks were without our regular dummy half in Olly & our wing-heeled flyer Sam so others had to step up to the plate today & produce, also it was a first bow for the statuesque Tyler Davis making his debut for the Sharks, he started on the bench to watch & learn to begin with.

Clock Face kicked off to us & Leo takes it on the first bounce & immediately put his & the teams stamp on this game with a surging, lung-bursting run up the middle, carrying defenders with him for several metres, if this was the Sharks mood today then beware anyone in their path, every player had to follow Leo's example now & put it all in there. Steady progress up the field to the last tackle & a strong cross field kick from Harry forced a knock on close to the line & we had another set of 6, we had to capitalise on this as we were playing down the slope 1<sup>st</sup> half, Harlen takes us further & then a quick play the ball & George feeds Louie who cuts back inside from the right & catches the Clock defence napping to sneak over for our first try, goaled by the ever reliable Tom & 6-0 up in no time, could this last?

Back came the Miners & a high tackle on the 2<sup>nd</sup> gave away more ground & possession for 6 more tackles, 2 tackles in & Brody is laid out flat by a neck injury in the tackle, seems to have had his head in a crunched position. He isn't in a good way & cannot resume so Tyler is thrust in action earlier than planned & in at the deep end with the Sharks on their own line. Clock Face are trying to throw the ball about now but the Sharks are harassing them & moving in as the ball is bobbling about, a high kick on the last & comfortably taken by George facing his own line & under real pressure, George picks up from dummy half on the 2<sup>nd</sup> tackle & just cruises his way down the right edge with bodies flailing helplessly at thin air as he outstrips everybody to ground under the posts, the Sharks truly in command now as Harry converts & it's 12-0 up.

I suppose something had to give at some point as they relaxed slightly & a short delayed pass left a few of our defenders flat-footed & half asleep as the runner rounded Louie to cross for the Miners first try, quite disappointing after that start, try converted so Clock back in it at 12-6.

Harry & Tom were settling into their new roles as dummy half & stand-off respectively & warming to the tasks, our attack though seemed to have stagnated as the forwards were standing still passing & losing ground, someone had to take it by the scruff of the neck, so step up Harlen who initially juggled with the pass & threw the Clock defence momentarily as they stood back but Harlen just bulldozed his way down toward the left corner shrugging tackles off as he passed to score out wide, Tom adding the extras & margin regained at 18-6.

Our middle men in the shape of Will, Harvey, Tom, Tyler, Leo & Harlen were handling the Clock attack comfortably it seems as they twisted & turned to create new ways to sneak through our ranks, Harry took a fend to the neck as he went in, and for once the Clock wide men spread the ball

across the line as the Sharks failed to slide across & fill in & they were in again down the right this time and the Sharks were guilty of not keeping the intensity up, conversion missed so 18-10 to the good now.

First run is a good burst up the middle by Harry, making 20 metres, then a first run for Tyler, going a bit side-ways at first but is so big he's hard to put down, the set fizzles out with a too-strong grubber by Tom that rolls harmlessly dead. The Miners make too much easy ground on the first 2 tackles, but Rhys stems the tide with a couple of powerful shoulder tackles that pin the Clock attack back again, the high punt is taken by Harlen over the try line & he clears the danger, another fine burst from Leo makes good yards up the right edge, carried on by George, better kick from Tom on the last now & Rhys at the other end this time clamps the defender up over the line so it's another set for the Sharks. Leo then George take it to the line & after the ball is fumbled backwards, Harlen then takes on the Clock advancing defence with another muscular blast which carries him & the ball just over the line for his 2<sup>nd</sup>, Harry stubs the conversion under the bar this time so it's now 22-10, still in command but not totally convincing, yet!

There was still time for the Miners to make easy ground with some great handling in the first 3 tackles & a play reverse to the poorly defended right edge of the Sharks saw them barge their way over & with a conversion on the stroke of half time making it 22-16 at the break, a poor end to a promising first half.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Half:** The Sharks turned around with right rollicking ringing in their ears from the half time team talk, even though they were ahead they had to face the Miners coming downhill now & could & should have been further in front, specific instructions were given to improve things & didn't they just, what a response.

Leo started the 2<sup>nd</sup> as solidly as he started the 1<sup>st</sup> with 2 solo tackles that pinned the Miners back, setting the scene for the whole half, Louie then produced a killer tackle as the Clock left winger powered down the edge, Leo fields another high kick easily then Luke & Will take it further, George drops an inside ball to Tom who simply floats between defenders & seems to saunter clear & just manages to slam the ball on the line to score, he duly adds the extras & looking to be pulling clear now at 28-16.

George then produces a solo tackling masterclass & the onrushing, intimidating defensive line forces a Clock knock on with the extra pressure, this is what they do best, choke the opposition attack of any time & space. Tyler & Louie then take us forward along with a burst by George who almost gets clear, Harry then attacks the line from a dummy scoot & lays a tempting ball for Leo who almost bullies his way over, a high kick is then fielded just in front of the line by the Clock defence & they survive this time. A strange high, long ball early in the tackle count is easily dealt with by Louie, he'll collect them all day thank you very much, the resulting high tackle is punished as we walk the 8 metres further up the field, Tyler is now finding his feet & is getting the idea of straight running is less exhausting & gains more ground than lateral running, settling in nicely & growing in confidence, a fumble by Harlen after an injury break in play is spilled & we defend again.

Something then upsets a few of the Sharks middle men & they become more aggressive in the tackle, Clock can't handle it, you just don't upset our guys, it will hurt if you do, the Miners have had a warning! Both teams are now warned.

Another kick through is gobbled up by Louie, they're sick of the sight of him now, Rhys gets a taste of his own medicine as he is all wrapped up as he goes at full speed, a brick wall he didn't see coming, it doesn't halt the Sharks though as the ball then goes through the hands of George, Harlen & Leo who

is in space to cross down the right side & back under the posts, superb positive play there & oozing confidence now, Harry converts this time & now in cruising mood at 34-16.

More pressure by the Sharks defensive line on the 2<sup>nd</sup> tackle forces a knock-on into touch & we have the ball back again, Clock are truly rattled now as they are penalised on the 1<sup>st</sup> for a high shot on Rhys, a dose then repeated on Louie on the 2<sup>nd</sup> again as the Miners keep getting pegged back by their own indiscipline, Harry then wastes the opportunity by trying to scoot down the blind side & gets forced into touch in the left corner on the 2<sup>nd</sup> tackle, a gift totally returned.

It's now the Sharks turn to step over the line as they are guilty of some high stuff on a rare Clock foray into our half, being a bit lazy here, but the pressure is kept up though as the Clock spill the ball almost predictably now with the Sharks line in their sights. Tyler, Will & George make great yards up the middle then Tom & Luke get close in the left corner, a hurried grubber by George on the last is mopped up by a great pick up though & that threat is over. The Miners then manoeuvre over to the left & again Louie is there to flatten any attempt to get around him, another high kick is faultlessly dealt with by Rhys & our line is intact again. The Sharks show their power, pace & handling as they prod & prompt a tiring Miners defence as first Tyler produces his best run as he just won't be put down, great leg driving, then George turns the ball back inside for Rhys to skip between two sleepy defenders & away he goes to roll over the line under the posts, Tom tags the 2 points on & it's one-way traffic at 40-16 now, who would've thought it?

The Clock lads had a last blast & received a penalty within 5 metres of our line for ripping the ball out, the pressure came out on top again though as they couldn't handle the ball or the choking line speed & the ball went down again. Great metres gained then by Tyler, Harry & Louie saw a high kick on the 4<sup>th</sup> by George, fielded deep by the full back who thought he could squirt around the outside on the left but our cover defence was terrific & three defenders dragged him over the touch line on the 1<sup>st</sup> tackle, our ball again.

From the resulting scrum Harry scooted across field & brought Leo back onto the ball who almost managed to get away through the middle again, a last desperate shirt tug just stopping him, a spill by Will & a turnover brought on the last set of the match by the Miners, the Sharks then saw out the last 6 tackles comfortably & it was a resounding win for them, revenge for the reverse fixture & to nil them in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half was proof that they do listen when given the hair dryer treatment & did respond positively & boy was that a team performance, every lad contributed something & they all played for each other, it doesn't always happen but it felt so good today when it did, **MUST KEEP THIS UP** & this momentum has to be maintained. This is truly what this bunch of Sharks are capable of & maybe much more, they can be the best in Group A on this performance, they have to believe in themselves now, no complacency or over-confidence but just pure self-belief, there'll have been some sore bodies in St Helens on Monday morning, & some bruised egos no doubt.

**Scorers:** Tries: Louie, Harlen 2, George, Tom, Leo, Rhys

Goals: Tom 4, Harry 2

**Up the Sharks!**

**Awards:**

Coaches MOM: Tyler Davis

Parents MOM: Rhys Clayton