

Berkshire RFU U20s Secure Thrilling Victory Over Gloucestershire RFU U20s

Venue: Stroud RFC

Opponents: Gloucestershire RFU U20s

Berkshire RFU U20s travelled to Stroud RFC to face a formidable Gloucestershire RFU U20s side in what promised to be a physical and tactical battle. With last-minute adjustments and player changes, the Berkshire squad departed from RAMS RFC, ready to embrace the challenge ahead.

From the outset, it was clear that Gloucestershire's forward pack would play a pivotal role. The hosts came out of the blocks strongly, asserting their dominance early on. Berkshire, however, quickly settled into the game. Despite conceding the first try and going 5-0 down in the opening minutes, the team regrouped, found its rhythm, and began to function as a cohesive unit.

First Half: A Battle of Momentum

The fightback began in the 25th minute. After sustained pressure on the Gloucestershire try line, a quick, short pass from the ruck found Will Spain, who displayed a fantastic line and carry to dot down. Will Hibberdine added the extras, levelling the scores at 5-5.

Gloucestershire responded almost immediately, retaking the lead at 12-7 by the 29th minute. But Berkshire refused to be outdone. A turnover in their own half was swiftly turned into an attacking opportunity. A pinpoint 50/22 kick and chase from Theo set up a rapid lineout, and Louis Roumignac capitalised, crossing the whitewash to make it 12-12. Hibberdine's conversion put Berkshire ahead for the first time, 12-14.

The seesaw battle continued. Will Spain repeated his earlier heroics with another try, extending Berkshire's lead to 12-19. Hibberdine's conversion made it 12-21. Gloucestershire hit back just before the break, narrowing the gap to 17-21. In a dramatic finish to the half, Gloucestershire scored in injury time to take a slender 22-21 lead into the interval.

Second Half: Tactical Masterclass

The second half was a testament to Berkshire's resilience and tactical acumen. A rousing half-time talk from Seb Reynolds, Ollie Taylor, and James Baker provided the clarity and structure needed to weather the storm. The forwards, through relentless phases, laid the platform for Will Spain to crash over from a lineout after 10 minutes of sustained pressure, extending Berkshire's lead to 22-26.

For the remainder of the half, Berkshire absorbed wave after wave of Gloucestershire attacks. Turnovers were won, and clever kicking pinned the hosts deep in their own 22. The defensive line, led by the entire squad, stood firm like a wall. As the clock ticked down, it was clear that either side could snatch the victory. However, Berkshire's

defensive efforts proved decisive, repelling everything Gloucestershire threw at them in the final 10 minutes.

Final Thoughts

This was a gladiatorial contest—end-to-end rugby where both teams left everything on the field. Berkshire's ability to soak up pressure, secure turnovers, and execute its game plan under immense pressure was the difference. The victory was a team effort, with every player contributing to a memorable performance.

A special thank you to Stroud RFC for their exceptional hospitality and for hosting a fantastic game of rugby.

Next Up: Berkshire RFU U20s now turn their attention to Cornwall, where another stern test awaits against a proud rugby county. The squad will take confidence from this hard-fought win as they prepare for the next challenge.