

Romans take sting out of Hornets

CHESTER ROMANS 12 HULL HORNETS 0

The Chester Romans welcomed the Hull Hornets and miserable conditions to Chester Rugby Club for their first home game of the season on Sunday. Chester deservedly coming away the victors but a rugged Hull side remained in the game for a lot longer than people may have give them credit for.

Hull won the toss and chose to receive and immediately from their first play gave the ball to strong St.Lucian Running Back St Pierre for a five yard gain, The Roman defence were subjected to this monotonous onslaught of St Pierre all game, with the running back accepting the hand off from his Quarterback for the majority of the game if not all but a handful of offensive plays on the day. All credit to the Running Back he had the stamina to keep going all game without showing signs of tiredness or weakness and it regularly took several Romans to bring him down. The Roman defence this year has so far stood strong and there were several defenders in double figure tackles by the end of the game, taking nothing away from them The Roman defence they found St Pierre often with 3, 4 and 5 tacklers arriving at once such is their determination to get the job done this year.

The first half was not helped by the conditions and neither team could mount any serious drive, Chester being the only team to break into the opposition's red zone area, only to turn the ball over to Hull. Only once did Hull look like scoring and that came on the play following the turnover on Hull's own 19 yard line. St Pierre managed to elude 2 tackles and seemed to be in the clear and destined to score down the sideline, Roman Cornerback Mark Donald managed to sprint across from the far side of the field and tackle the big running back deep into Chester's half, a flag on the play for an illegal block in the back by a Hornet brought the play back to the Roman 39 yard line. With both defences not giving much up, the half ended at 0-0.

The Romans received the ball in the start of the third quarter and immediately a more determined offence took the field. The Romans began to move the ball well on the ground, getting 6 first downs in a 13 play drive which saw Roman Running Back James Tootle get big gains of 23 and 16 yards to move the ball down to The Hornets's 6 yard line, The Romans were immediately hit with a 5 yard penalty on the next play for offside and resumed their drive with first and goal from the 11 yard line. Glyn Chadwick ran the ball for 9 yards down to the 2 yard line, but immediately left the game following an accidental late hit to his head from a Hornet defender whilst Chadwick was on the ground, The Romans went backwards on the next 2 plays before James Tootle ran it into the end zone on 4th down to give the Romans a 6-0 lead, the extra point wasn't converted.

The Roman defence worked well as a unit following the kick off with no less than four 5 and 6 man tackles keeping the Hornets penned inside their own half and when they couldn't convert on 4th down and 1 yard to go following a Dave Goodall and Rich Posnett tackle in the backfield, the Romans took over on the Hornet 41 yard line. The Romans steadily moved the ball over the next 8 plays down to the Hornet 12 yard line, when James Tootle managed to jink his way thru the defence and break the plain of the end zone to score the Romans 2nd touchdown. The 2point attempt failed but the Romans led 12-0 as the 3rd qtr came to an end.

Both sides had 3 possessions in the fourth quarter, Hull turning the ball over on downs twice and being intercepted by Mark Donald on the other, the Romans were forced to punt twice and time expired as they took a knee at the end of the game.

The Romans will be happy with their win, if not their overall performance and their 2nd clean sheet in 3 games and remain undefeated for the season sitting in 2nd place in the division with a record of 2 wins and 1 tie. Some notable performances including Dave Goodall finishing with an amazing 21 tackles and 1 sack and Mark Donald who ensured his Punts gave the Hornets the ball inside their 20 yard line every time he was called upon. James Tootle whose two touchdowns now take him to five for the season, ran for over 80 yards. The Romans now have a couple of weeks off before facing Glasgow Tigers at Chester on 7th June.