

Waterloo v The Barbarians 1982

The highlight of Waterloo centenary season was a Thursday night fixture against the star studded Baa Baas team .

Temporary floodlights had been erected and by the time kick off came 5 pm the ground was jam-packed with up to 7 thousand spectators attending.

The invitation team included 13 Internationals with the three current All Blacks drawing most attention. They were Graham Mourie (Capt) Murray Mexted and Gary Knight. Not only were they current All Blacks, they were considered the best players in their respective positions in the world.

Waterloo were no soft touch themselves and captained by Lol Connor they included Jim Syddall, Mike Leach, Nigel Wilkinson, Colin Fisher and Frank McEverley in the forwards. The Waterloo backs included two 19 year olds Alan Simpson and Ian Aspinall from Cowley school. The youngsters were combined with experienced Dave Carfoot, John Whitehead, Jeff Tickle and Maurice Cotter in the back line.

The game started off at tremendous pace and it was obvious that Waterloo, urged on by large crowd, were up for the challenge. 'Loo scored a spectacular try after 15 mins when flanker Jasper Bartlett raced through the Baa Baas defence from 35 yards. The conversation kicked by Maurice Cotter followed. Little did we know at that time that Maurice would have 100% kicking record for the evening.

The game continued to flow from end to end for the greater part of both halves. Waterloo were a well organised team and with ten mins to go the players knew how to turn the screw. Waterloo prided itself on its fitness and the close driving game of the forwards supported with Dave Carfoot's kicking game and some outstanding team defence put the Baa Baas on the back foot. Although camped in their own half, Waterloo put the game to bed with a drop goal from Carfoot and a final penalty from Maurice Cotter. A 24-14 win for 'Loo.

The fun didn't stop there. Jim Syddall had been barracked by a group of Hightown supporters throughout the match. On the final whistle Jim suddenly disappeared into the crowd to 'chat' to his verbal assailant. Fortunately for the gentleman, the Waterloo forwards managed to rein in Jim before any damage occurred.

The Baa Baas match was the 2nd game in a 6 day spell for the 1st team. The previous Sunday, the 1sts played a Dick Greenwood XV (England under 23). On the Saturday after the Baa Baas' match the opponents were Nottingham (4 current England Internationals) away .

All games were won to keep the 100 % record going.

The Baa Baas match was always going to be a great Waterloo occasion the result was the icing on the cake!

Gareth Hopkin