

Dear Steve

Some time ago I wrote out a report of the 1977 1stXV season for "Janus". However, "Janus" has not appeared. As this was probably the best season the school has ever had it seemed a pity not to have a written record of it, so I have reproduced here the report that would have been published if "Janus" had been brought out and I am sending a copy to each member of the team. It seems rather a long time ago now - we've had another successful season since - but I hope it will bring back some pleasant memories.

Yours, John Morris

Results	v Duke of York's	A	Won	23-4
	v R.G.S. Colchester	H	Won	29-4
	v Northgate	H	Won	40-4
	v Champion	A	Won	15-10
	v Framlingham	H	Won	20-8
	v R.H.S. Holbrook	A	Won	32-0
	v Norwich	H	Won	22-4
	v Trent College	A	Won	22-21
	v Normanton	A	Won	31-6
	v Roundhay	A	Won	33-10
	v Woodbridge	A	Won	40-0
	v St. Joseph's	H	Won	70-8
	v Wymondham	A	Won	16-3
	v Culford	H	Won	44-0
	v Ipswich	A	Won	44-4
	v K.C.S. Wimbledon	A	Won	20-8
Played 16 - Won 16 - Points for 501 - Points against 89				

This season began well, got better, and ended on the highest note with a magnificent win against K.C.S. Wimbledon. The pattern for the term was established in the first two matches. Against a heavier Duke of York's pack we struggled for possession but scored four fine tries when the three-quarters took their opportunities, and defended well for long periods. Cedric Carr's two individualistic tries were the first of many we were to enjoy during the season.

A fine team performance against Colchester saw the forwards becoming a more cohesive force with Chris Hopkirk outstanding in the back-row, David Bates and Phil Anthistle completely dominant in the line-outs, and Colin Matthews hooking well and winning loose ball.

The highlight of the first half of term was a victory against Champion in a new fixture. In the rain we trailed 3-10 at half-time but came back with great spirit in the second half. A strong run by Hopkirk and a penalty by Steve Halliday eventually saw us home. By now it was clear that this was an unusually good side in the making, with no really weak links and a number of extraordinarily gifted players, especially amongst the backs. Adrian Thompson was almost always outstanding at fly-half: a player with great all-round ability and fiercely competitive; Stephen Halliday's forthright tackling and sleight of hand, along with Simon Marchant's speed and incisiveness, provided us with a centre combination of real strength; on one wing Carr's "magic" - his speed off the mark, swerve and sidestep - gave as much pleasure to the spectators as it did to his own team; by moving David Thomas to full-back we found that attack was possible from any part of the field, and his devastating running destroyed several opposition sides. These players - along with Dougie Wiseman who was always around and sometimes very penetrative on the wing - were well served by Nick Evans at scrum-half; his strong passing and hounding of the opposition scrum-halves played a big part in the team's success.

The half-term tour was a great success thanks to some great rugby and Mr. Young's family who looked after us so well. A close game at Trent College was followed by the best display of the season at Normanton. Superb kicking by Thompson kept Normanton at bay for most of the first half and in the second half a Thompson drop-goal, two Halliday penalties and two tremendous Carr tries along with some remarkable covering and tackling by the whole team when Normanton attacked made it a game to remember. The team took some time to get into its stride at Roundhay, but some good running from Wiseman and Thomas saw us through.

The second half of term saw continued success from the now very confident team. Simon Jones and Mike Ayres were making their presence felt, and flankers Lance Jowers and Steve Berry were improving all the time. Perhaps one of the best performances was against Culford when Thomas scored four tries from full-back, and a team display of running, handling rugby resulted in many exciting moments and a conclusive 44-0 victory. In this match Thompson, Halliday and Thomas showed just how good they could be.

The final highlight was the visit to K.C.S. Wimbledon, one of the most successful London schools. We were outplayed in the forwards, but were again rescued by some outstanding back play. A clever individualist try by Marchant put us ahead in the first half, but at 6-6 and on the defensive in the second half we seemed to be struggling. We then scored three of the season's finest tries: Hopkirk switched with Thomas in midfield for the latter to run 60 yards and score; then Thompson raced after his own perfectly-weighted kick to score; finally Thompson ran 60 yards from his own line, passed inside to the supporting Hopkirk, and on to Marchant - a great try.

The record speaks for itself, and one reward was to be chosen as one of the best six schools in England by "Rugby World". But the bare statistics hide the real pleasure of this

season. All season Woolverstone played running, handling rugby that was a delight to watch and exhilarating to play. On top of this there were many memorable moments: Thompson's brilliant display at Normanton; his inter-passing movement with Jowers v St Joseph's; Stephen Jones - in effect only two weeks out of the 3rd form - coming off the field "shell-shocked" after his first match at Dover, but how well he was to play: Anthistle in the line-out, and his dummy (or did I dream that?!); Hoppy's try at Campion; Carr - his forte was scoring tries that were never possible. One could go on for ever - it was that kind of season.

Disappointments? From a team point of view, none. From a personal point of view, just a few: Thomas too old to play for England; Thompson too injured; Halliday, good enough to render two England centres innocuous but apparently not what Eastern Counties wanted. But all in all, an immensely enjoyable season, and I suspect many a grandchild in 50 years time will have to listen again to the story of " ... how we beat Campion, or Normanton ... and everybody else in 1977."

The following are to be congratulated on their 1st XV colours: Cedric Carr, Simon Marchant, Lance Jowers, Philip Anthistle, David Bates, Chris Hopkirk, Colin Matthews and David Thomas.

The following played for Eastern Counties: Adrian Thompson, Chris Hopkirk, Stephen Halliday and David Bates.

Thompson and Hopkirk played for Eastern Counties and had England trials

John C. Morris