

## FOUR CLEAN SHEETS AS TEDDINGTON PROGRESS IN ETIHAD AIRWAYS CURTAIN RAISER CUP



A frugal defence that didn't surrender any tries in four games was the basis of Teddington U9 A team's success in the first round of the Etihad Airways Curtain Raiser Cup at The Stoop on Saturday, November 3.

Finalists for the last two years, The Antlers kicked off the first of their four 10 minute games with a 2-0 win over a strong Dorking side, fresh from 'A' festival success, with a brace of tries out wide and some strong defending.

Some changes to the team for their next match against Whitstable did nothing to disrupt Teddington's cohesive play and they ran out comfortable 3-0 winners against the Kent side. Again, tenacious defending coupled with some excellent rucking allowed the boys to largely dominate the match.

With only three teams playing on Saturday it meant that everybody played one another twice, with the overall winner being the only team guaranteed a place in the semi-finals in March.

As often happens when two well drilled sides play each other in quick succession, the second match is a much tighter affair, and this proved to be the case on Saturday against Dorking. The earlier game showed the sides' strengths and weaknesses and the second contest was a war of attrition with neither side able to gain the upper hand. Teddington defended brilliantly against Dorking who spent much of the time in their opponents' half but the Antlers created some good scoring opportunities on the break which they failed to take advantage of, resulting in the inevitable 0-0 stalemate.

A win or draw in the final match would guarantee progression to the next round and Teddington's U9s duly obliged with another win over Whitstable. Again their defence looked very solid, although the rucking was not as efficient, as they ran in two tries in a match they never looked like losing.

Teddington's Antlers are continuing to improve their all round game and are becoming a very efficient, difficult-to-beat side that nevertheless plays attractive rugby. Their tackling has been particularly good and their passing and straight running has improved immensely. Rucking still needs some work but that can be worked on in training before the festivals start again in the new year.

As always, Harlequins put on a well-organised tournament for which we are very grateful and their team subsequently entertained the boys with a very close game with Worcester.

Squad: James Meadows, Tadgh O'Hagan, Lawrence Willson, Eddie Peel, Harry Kilby, Finlay Jalovaara, Bruce Gilbert, Toby Dutton, Tom Tosetti, Sam Sweetland, Josh Blackman and Alexander Cozens.

Coaches: Michael O'Hagan and Neil Meadows  
Report: Julien Cozens