



## In Touch

On paper it was a pretty evenly matched contest. On the pitch it was too. As has been the case in recent games Ludlow went behind to a couple of well worked tries by Stratford-Upon-Avon but then found a way to score tries of their own. Farming duties, promises made to partners about deeds to be done on non-rugby days, and matches re-arranged through flooding to occupy those previously vacant days meant that Ludlow took to the pitch with a different look. Stalwarts Matt Davies and Jack Lines were among those missing but how their young replacements stepped up to the mark to fill their shoes. Next year we will have a young team that will be the envy of many.

Ludlow set about reducing the deficit and tries from wing Matt Ashton and Kieran Pinches standing in at centre put Ludlow in a much better position to turn on the power in the second half. Step forward Ben Black and Jim Alderson. The opposition were unable to contain them as they both powered their way to the line for second half tries. But everyone played their part, both in defense and attack. Stratford did find their way to the Ludlow line again in the second half but Ludlow finished very much on top. Final score Ludlow 24 Stratford Upon Avon 19. Ludlow Brewery Man of the match went to another young find, Toby Morgan.



*Ludlow v Stratford-Upon-Avon  
Photos courtesy of Trevor Patchett*

And so to the Seconds and another end to end game. Ludlow lost 32-45 but, thanks to a late ref arrival for the Firsts game, many of us got to watch a good deal of this match too. It looked like it was going to be a try fest for Shrewsbury Seconds from the start with Ludlow, for reasons already stated, fielding a patched-up team, many of whom hadn't played in position or together before. But when Ludlow got it together, they scored some great tries and had a few disallowed too. Stu Lewis crossed the line three times but only one

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was allowed, the others ruled as held up and double movement. Other tries came from Ludlow Brewery Man of the Match, Colin Fish and two youngsters to watch for the future, Aaron Griffiths and Luke Murrell.



Ludlow II v Shrewsbury II  
Photos courtesy of Trevor Patchett

And so to next week: Seconds at home to Stone and Firsts away to Stow-on-the-Wold (kick off 2.15pm). The Six Nations, which has built nicely to a climatic finale scheduled for Saturday will be on show on the big screens in the clubhouse with Wales taking to the field first at 2.15pm. Should be a good day at The Linney.

I knew that I was tempting fate by saying that Gerry Acton would put me right over my mention of his rugby career. I received an email by return and from it I quote to set the record straight.

*"In 1961 I was playing for Ludlow on the racecourse. In 1962 I went to Moseley for trials and after two games in the 2nd team Moseley United was selected to play at home against Sale when my opposite number was a Scottish International a British Lion called Shackleton who ran rings round me!!!*

*My first away game was against Llanelli with a 10,000 crowd. I did play at Twickenham in front of a 60,000 crowd in 1965 at the Middlesex Sevens and scored a try and if Sam Doble had converted it we would have been in the semi final. My games with Keith Fielding were in fact whilst I was playing for Ludlow. In I think 1972 Martin Green the Moseley captain (Who went on to be the first proper England Manager) rang me and asked if I was still fit and as all their centers were injured could I play . Keith was by then a real star and they were worried I wouldn't give him the ball! Roger Evans famously pretended at my This is your Life evening that he was there. Instead, he showed a clip of the wing I played with the week after who Acker Freeman and he had filmed talking to camera from a mobile fish and chip shop. Rather worrying thing for me is that that the Moseley backs that I played with in 1965/66 I'm the only one still operating.*

*England full back Sam Doble, scrum half Jan Webster, Fly half John Finlan, wing Martin Hale have all passed away. Keith Hatter the other wing uncapped has also gone and my co centre Colin Macfadyan (England captain and British Lion) is on his last legs with dementia."*

I welcome feedback like that. Ian Smith is another who often picks up on my random comments in 'In Touch' and, as an ex-referee, is himself a prolific contributor to a discussion site currently focusing on how some of rugby's rules could be changed for the better to make the game more flowing and remove some of the stoppage time. I seem to recall that we actively welcomed stoppages so that we could get our breath back, but then we weren't as fit as our players are now. Ian has also contributed on the subject of cutting down the number of substitutes in the community game. Recognising the difficulty a lot of clubs have in running a regular seconds team while many players are warming the bench without a full game for the Firsts he wonders if cutting the number of subs might help.

See you on Saturday,  
Andy Wright  
President Ludlow Rugby Club