

## **Paphos Tigers 11     Dhekelia Lions 3**

With the Tigers and Lions being the only unbeaten sides in the League this year a hard and close game was eagerly expected. From Marcus Holden's kick off the Lions gathered the ball and drove to the Tigers 10 metre line where Gary Thomson, playing in yet another "this is definitely my last game", was penalised for going over the top after a great tackle, the Lions penalty kick dropped short allowing the Tigers to clear the ball to touch. Having survived this scare the Tigers now settled in, the Lions game was to run quick ball wide but the Tigers backs were up to the challenge and were up quick in defence causing Lions mistakes. In attack the Tigers varied their moves but the Lions defence stood firm, on 12 minutes Marcus Holden was short with a penalty from out wide, the Lions quickly ran the ball straight back and broke through but a dropped pass ended what looked like being the first score. The Lions now had a period of good possession but once again the Tigers Defence held, George Agathocleous making a massive try saving tackle into touch but the Tigers were penalised in the ensuing lineout, so on 22 minutes the Lions opened the scoring by slotting the penalty. The Lions stuck to their running game, Matt Lowe, Kyle Oelofse and Tony Crassas all making great tackles and forcing errors, the Tigers forwards, were now putting great pressure on the Lions, Stavvi and Wareen Dean both making penetrating drives with the help of an organised driving pack. As half time approached the Tigers disruption and tenacity paid off and they worked their way well into the Lions 22 where they were rewarded with a penalty which Marcus Holden put over to make the half time score 3-3.

The Tigers spent the first 5 minutes of the second half pinned in their own half, a good box kick by Dimitri Maratheftis well supported saw them move up into Lions territory where they won a penalty which Marcus Holden kicked nicely into touch in the corner, from the lineout the Tigers moved the ball out with George Agathocleous being tackled in front of the posts 20 metres out and the Lions giving away a penalty, the Tigers spurned what looked to be a certain 3 points and opted for a quick tap the move ending with a dropped pass, the Tigers forwards kept the pressure up disrupting the scrum and forcing a touch on the Lions five metre line, the Lions were caught off side in front of the posts and Marcus Holden slotted the easy kick. With 25 minutes to play it was any bodies game, both sides giving their all and playing great rugby, with little time left Warren Dean made yet another of his gallops from the back of the scrum ably supported by his back row colleagues keeping him on his feet and eventually going to ground after a twenty five metre drive well in the Lions 22. The Tigers kept the play in the 22 with the Lions defending for all they were worth when from a maul the ball came flying out to young Gavin O'Brien who quickly threw it wide to Tony Crassas nicely positioned to run into the corner for a try. The try was unconverted and as Marcus Holden bent down to pick up his kicking tee referee Johnny Stavrinou whistled for full time, the Tigers winning 11-3. Well done the Tigers and a Merry Christmas to you all.

