

East Midlands Rugby Trials

In this piece of coursework I am going to write an account of my experiences of getting an East Midlands Rugby Union trial and my build up to the day.

It all started on a miserable day, rain pouring against the windows. I was sat in the TGC our school sixth form study centre with a group of mates that I play rugby with in the school team. We were discussing the weekends games, when I walked Mr Taylor the head of P.E. we thought he was just returning marked pieces of coursework, as he had a couple of files in his arms. When he reached us he asked us all if we could go to his office at the start of lunch as he had some forms for us to collect, as he walked off I remember we tried to work out what the forms could be for.

At the start of the lunch break we headed over to his office which is based outside the Driver Hall on bottom site, when we arrived there were already a couple of year 11's stood there waiting. After a few minutes he walked in with a hand full of forms, he started to explain what the forms were for east midlands trials if we wanted to apply. After collecting the form I walked straight down to see my parents at work to give them the news. I couldn't believe what had happened, I was going to try out for a regional squad, an considering that I had never been consider for county going to east mids was the most amazing thing I could ever have wished for. I went in to talk to my mum; the look of astonishment on her face was a picture. A day that I thought was going to be like any other was turning out to be quite brilliant. When I left my mum I got straight in the phone to my dad to tell him the news, he was like my mum, and could quite believe it. It was and still is a dream of mine to play rugby at the highest level and I was being given the chance to prove myself.

I went back to school that afternoon and got talking to, two of my close mates Phil and Paul, who had also been put forward for the trials. We decided that instead of all training individually we should go together to help motivate and enable us to do ball skills as well as fitness. I remember that being the start of a very tuff 6 weeks.

That night I went home to find out that my parents had rang most of the family to tell them the news, it felt great at the time to know that I had the whole of the family behind me, but it was also an added pressure for the fact that everyone was, I suppose depending on me to do well.

Next day I met up with Phil and Paul to do our first training session we were going to do three gym sessions and one extra skills session a week, on top of our club training and weekend games. Our gym sessions were divided up into arms and shoulders, on a Monday, chest and back on a Wednesday, and legs on a Friday. We also added CV training to each session and occasionally made slight changes.

Looking back now I think that maybe I should have trained slightly more, from an earlier date I would have possibly got further. Another set back came about two or three weeks into the training, during a game for my club. We had been playing a tough game against Marlow, when I had jumped and taken a line out ball, and we got a driving maul going. After the ball had broke from the make and a ruck formed I hung back as a nine runner and Greg popped the ball up to me, I took the pull at full pace and broke through the first tackle. As I tried to side step the full-back to create a

gap to the line my ankle twisted beneath me. I remember thinking 'that's it I've gone and blown it now'. After coming off and the game finishing I got home as quick as I could to ice it. If the physiotherapist hadn't been as great then I don't think I would have made the trials.

After overcoming the injury I woke up on the morning of the trials feeling sick. I knew I had to force some breakfast down. Phil, came to pick me up, we left early so we had plenty of time to get there and prepare. When we arrived we registered and then got split into teams, we had all managed to get on the same team. I remember that they were telling us which coach was looking at which players. At this point I was in my own little world, I was here, I was as fit as I could be, and I was getting mentally prepared for what was about to happen. We all went off and warmed up then went to the coaches so they could say their bit and what they were looking for. In the first game I would be playing second row, I hadn't played there since the first few games of the season. Remember now coming off the pitch at the end of that game never having played that hard before, everyone had upped their game. We were playing twenty minuets each way. The sun was bearing down on us all the time. I remember going to my bag to and grabbing my water bottle before going to the physio to get the gash on my head covered up. Everyone was playing hard pushing the boundaries as much as they could, and using their boot, hence the gash on my head. About an hour later I got asked to play again this time I would be playing my preferred position of flanker. This game was even harder than the first. I got another boot to the face leaving stud marks all down the right hand side and across my eye. I also got shoed down my back for killing the ball. At the end of that game I went and spoke to both of the coaches that had been analysing my performance, they both said that I was a better flanker than lock, and that my technical skills were really good. They pretty much confirmed that I wouldn't be called back to the next round, because even though my skills and line out work was good, I did not have the size, weight and presence around the field, so basically I wasn't 'big enough'. I thanked them and after we had all been talked to we headed home.

In the car we chatted about it, we all agreed that it had been an amazing experience, and we would work hard for the next season to go back again. After discussing it with my parents that night, I forgot about it for a few weeks, until I got the letter through. It confirmed what I thought that I wouldn't be going through, although I had a slight glimmer of hope that I might have been called back.