



Old Albanian's Dan Watt scored one of the Hertfordshire tries. Picture: KARYN HADDON

Herts left broken as lead is lost in six fateful minutes to give Gloucestershire victory

Two converted tries in the final six minutes broke Hertfordshire hearts and gave Gloucestershire a narrow 31-29 win in the Bill Beaumont County Championship.

With the game in Lydney entering its final stages, Herts appeared to have things well and truly sown up with a 29-17 lead, but the home pack were to have the last word.

They forced Herts to concede a penalty and after they kicked to the touchline 15 metres out, a catch and drive was collapsed meaning a yellow card and more importantly a penalty try.

And with two minutes to go Rich Hance burst through the defence from 22 metres out and touched down to tie the scores.

It left James Moffat with a nervous kick but it was one he landed and the final whistle came soon after the restart.

Rugby Union

It leaves Hertfordshire on seven points, three points behind Gloucestershire.

And they need a bonus-point win at home to Cornwall, together with a Gloucestershire defeat, if they are to reach the final.

Harpenden's Luke Barber was a given a start along with Old Albanian trio Dan Watt, Oli Walliker and Harry Elbrow.

Woolams team-mates Aaron White, Tom Bednall and Morgan Thompson joined them from the replacements bench.

There were too many errors on both sides to make it a classic match but that did not detract from the excitement and the nail-biting finish.

Gloucestershire's pack showed their power from the start with Matt Lane pouncing on a loose

ball from a scrum to open the scoring. But a try from Tom McCrone, converted by Sean Taylor, put Hertfordshire ahead and that lead was increased when Elbrow was on hand to score try number two, Taylor again adding the extras.

However, a second for Lane and one from Danny Pointon, converted by Moffat, gave the hosts a 17-14 half-time lead.

But Hertfordshire opened the second half in fine style with two quick scores. Both came from tapped penalties, the first finished off by Taylor, which he converted, and the second by Watt.

Herts had chances, Watt and Taylor again involved, but the final pass went astray on both occasions and a penalty 13 minutes from time from Taylor was their only score.

It was to prove vital in the final despairing moments.

sport

Cricket

Middlesex arrive at Radlett today (Thursday) for their opening two Royal London one-day Cup matches with captain Steven Finn saying it is a return to the site of his first ever match.

The paceman has been appointed to lead the Seaxes' 50-over side for the first time, starting with the game against Essex and then Kent this Sunday.

He said: "It's where I played my first ever game of cricket, an U8 game on the bottom field

so it holds nice memories.

"We train a lot at Radlett, we played really well there last year and got the win against Glamorgan, so we'll be looking forward to going there again.

"We know the conditions better than the teams visiting and we can use that to our advantage, but we've got a long way to improve from where we've been in the last couple of years.

"I think we've got a squad that can rival most teams out there and hopefully we can do ourselves justice."

Athletics

St Albans Athletics Club had runners ranging from U13 to seniors competing at the County Championships.

George Withers ran a 5,000m personal best of 16 minutes 14 seconds, earning a silver medal in the process, while Sam Jones continues his dominance in the 400m winning the Herts title easing up through the line.

There was a PB for Jed Lumb in the U20 800m and Alex Harris took the U17 silver at the same distance.

Pippa Bailey ran strongly to

take gold and Jess Laitner bronze in the U20 race.

The U15 girls fielded three finalists with Lily Tse, Sarah McGrath and Antonia Jubb all running brilliantly but just missing out on medals.

And there were two finalists in the U13 boys with Alexander McDonald just being edged back into second and Matthew Nicholls finishing fifth in another PB.

Annabel Hedge won the U13 girls race, again in a new PB, with Phoebe Donoghue also going quicker than before.

Golf



Verulam Golf Club's juniors who won an invitational tournament before the Golf Sixes European Tour event.

Verulam Golf Club, the 'birthplace' of the Ryder Cup, found success at another unique golfing tournament.

The club's juniors were one of six clubs to be invited to the Centurion Golf Club for a competition before the new Golf Sixes European Tour event.

The matchplay tournament is an unusual concept aimed at a more modern take on the traditional game.

And the London Road club's youngsters did them proud by

taking the win thanks to some fine play.

They followed that by watching the professionals, with Ireland taking the overall win by defeating France in the final.

Verulam was the home of Samuel Ryder, who founded the Ryder Cup, and they hope the success plus the upcoming Europe v USA clash will be the perfect forerunner to the Samuel Ryder Young Golfer Initiative, a concept aimed at helping youngsters of all ages and abilities get into the game.

sport

Swimming

St Albans district school swimmers have achieved a double in 2018 - with the primary schools' team following the secondary squad in winning back-to-back Hertfordshire Championships.

The primary team produced an outstanding display at the Woodside pool in Watford.

The St Albans team, comprising the best 32 Year 5 and 6 students, edged out Watford by six points to win the Rosebowl trophy.

The Year 5 Boys' and Year 6 Girls' teams won trophy's with the Year 6 Boys' a close second to Watford.

There were four golds, William Fawcett (Y5 free), Cub

Maddison (Y6 breast), Yasmin Meadows (Y6 breast) and Phoebe Gill (Y6 back).

The team also achieved won a number of the relays.

Team Manager Andrew Ellis said: "The team were neck and neck with Watford right through the gala but never gave up and secured a very exciting win in the last few races."