

Ominous signs for St. Mary's

ALTHOUGH he saw his side go down 9-6 to St. Mary's College, Bective Rangers new Welsh coach Mike Ruddock was given more encouragement than his opposite number Dave Mooney at Templeville Road yesterday, writes Kieran Rooney.

Not that Bective Rangers did anything out of the ordinary — it was simply that the expectation level for All-Ireland Division One side St. Marys is so much greater.

All the signs are that St. Marys will do well to avoid relegation from Division One. Their recent tour of England saw them lose by the alarming margin of 49-8 to English First Division outfit Bristol.

Looking at them yesterday, it was easy to understand why. To be fair, they were missing some players, notably international centre Vincent Cunningham, but that hardly excused their lack-lustre effort.

Pushed back throughout in the scrums, they should really have gone down to a defeat. That they didn't was down to Bective's inability to make the best use of their possession.

Ruddock, a 31-year-old former Welsh "B" international who had to retire in his mid-twenties because of injury, is still finding his feet with Bective. He has arrived with impressive credentials having done extremely well with Welsh club Cross Keys for the past couple of seasons.

Significantly, all of Bective's points came from penalties yesterday, centre Micky Browner landing two while impressive right-wing Aidan White scored the only try of the game for St. Marys. Full-back Stephen Hennessy landed the conversion and also kicked a penalty.