

Wanderers slump to another loss

ST MARY'S 22

WANDERERS 10

From Tom Humphries at Templeville Road

ST MARY'S COLLEGE: S Hennessy, A White, V Cunningham, R Hernan, D Wall, G Doyle, S O'Beirne, B Keane, D Whitty, D Gillen, K Potts, S Jameson, B Gavin, N McCarthy, D Fanning

WANDERERS: M Mahon, J Riordan, M Cosgrave, J Duffy, N Metchette, M Wyse, B McGooley, B Culliton, E McKeown, G Halpin, N Ridgeway, M O'Neill, J Kenny, P Kenny, K Leahy.

Referee: MJ Bailey (Wales)

LAST week the script for Irish rugby's latest production was severely tampered with. Yesterday at Templeville Road St Mary's dispensed with it altogether as they ad-libbed their way to a fine victory over Wanderers who had the big star billing when the curtain went up.

It should be said that Wanderers these days look strangely incapable of learning their lines anyway. The advent of the new league has robbed them of the fitness advantage they enjoyed last year and yesterday St Mary's matched them pace for pace in the loose.

As evidenced last week Munster aggression will always discomode sides like Wanderers. Amongst the Dublin bluebloods however the Merrion Road outfit usually expect to trade at profit.

Not so at Templeville Road yesterday. Wanderers scored two tries in a busy opening ten minutes but thereafter where Garryowen had beaten them by brawn last week St Mary's set about the job by dint of sheer improvisation and Wanderers were held scoreless for the final 70 minutes.

The game opened with a superb Malcolm Mahon try. The second row O'Neill ploughed through some stiff St Mary's cover feeding Paddy Kenny as the ruck formed. The ball was released immediately to Wyse, who found Mahon in position to gallop over after only three minutes.

Gearoid Doyle replied within two minutes with an opportunistic drop goal but Wanderers were determined to stamp some authority on the proceedings. On ten minutes, after a spell of strong

pressure they scored a classic try moving the ball from the left corner through the back line for the energetic John Riordan on the right wing to go over in the corner.

The large and partisan crowd settled down for a rout. Wanderers' exhibition of power play never materialised however as St Mary's introduced a little imagination to the proceedings.

For the remainder of the half the home pack was dominant with prop Derek Gillen in particular, excelling in all aspects of forward play.

The pressure and the deviation from stylistic conventions paid off. Hennessy scored with a straightforward penalty on 15 minutes and missed a more difficult one on the half hour.

With five minutes of the first half left scrum half Sean O'Beirne made a fine break from a 40 yard scrum, feeding dummies to left wings, right wings and centres before finding Gearoid Doyle to his left. Doyle had the simplest of tasks to run over for the try of the day scoring easily beneath the posts from a position which made Hennessy's conversion attempt a formality. Hennessy added a penalty in the last minute of the half leaving St Mary's five points to the good.

Hennessy scored a fine penalty within five minutes of the restart putting eight points between the teams. Right wing Aidan White was put through from another superb Gearoid Doyle break for a try on 70 minutes to end the scoring.

Wanderers mounted a late siege on the opposition line which Doyle repelled with a couple of fine kicks to leave Wanderers with two losses before they had even left Dublin for a league match.

Wanderers face crisis after another defeat

ST MARY'S.....22
WANDERERS.....10

WANDERERS, on the top of the heap at the end of last season and immediately installed as joint, if not outright, favourites for the new All Ireland League find themselves pointless and on the verge of a crisis following their poor performance against St Mary's at Templeville Road on Saturday, writes SEAN KILFEATHER. No doubt the wagons will now be drawn around in a circle as they await the arrival of the cavalry in the shape of a return to fitness of Philip Mathews, but even his considerable powers may not be enough to rescue them at this stage.

St Mary's, on the other hand, were cock-a-hoop after this storming performance and had the Irish selectors turned up at the after-match celebrations they would have been faced with an immediate demand that Noel McCarthy be brought on to the flank for the match against Argentina, that Gearoid Doyle be put on standby and that a public apology be offered to Declan Fanning for the fact that his trophy sideboard does not boast an Irish cap.

There was no consolation whatever for Wanderers for, not only was Mathews still uncertain about a date for his comeback but they also had the misfortune of having to add the names of Malcolm Mahon and Michael Cosgrave to the casualty list. There were many glum faces hovering over Wanderers ties on Saturday evening.

It hadn't looked all that good for St Mary's after 10 minutes of the match when the Wanderers were

leading by 10-3 but Wanderers were to remain scoreless for the rest of the match as Mary's chalked up a total of a goal, a try, three penalties and a drop goal to a goal and a try.

Wanderers had opened up impressively with the wind behind them and before a crowd of about 1,500. A fierce drive from a ruck by Michael O'Neill set up an opportunity for Malcolm Mahon to go over the Mary's line. Mary's, through Doyle, kicked their way into Wanderers territory and when the ball came back from a Maul to Doyle he dropped the cheekiest of goals.

But it was Wanderers who really impressed after 10 minutes through a movement which saw at least 10 passes delivered with speed and skill. The ball was moved first left and then right where Duffy, Mary Wyse, Cosgrave and others set up the opportunity for John Riordan to sprint over the line. Duffy converted and St Mary's looked ragged.

With admirable forward work by the entire pack but particularly Derek Gillen, Dick Whitty, Kevin Potts and the indefatigable duo McCarthy and Fanning, St Mary's took control. Wanderers gave away a penalty in the 24th minute and Stephen Hennessy goaled. Hennessy missed a rather more difficult opportunity before Sean O'Beirne, who beavered away all day with admirable industry, dummied his way through the cover to set up Duffy for a try under the posts which Hennessy converted.

Wanderers came back strongly but could not make the breakthrough and Hennessy scored

from another penalty to leave the score 15-10 at the break.

Poor discipline in the Wanderers ranks conceded another three points to Hennessy immediately after the break and when Wanderers lost Mahon and Cosgrave (replaced by O'Callaghan and Evans) they also lost their spirit and then Doyle and Fanning moved the ball right to Aidan White who ran in for an unconverted try to leave Wanderers trailing badly.

Mathews, as despondent as his colleagues afterwards, said that his tonsillitis problem had not cleared up as quickly as he had hoped and that he was still unsure of when he will be fit enough to resume. Wanderers need him badly right now but they also need to sharpen up their all-round efforts. Mary's showed them on Saturday that spirit and drive and concentration will be needed if survival in this new atmosphere is to be achieved.

Wanderers probably felt that the momentum of last year would carry them along but they seem mistaken. Hard though Neville Ridgeway, Michael O'Neill, Kelvin Leahy and the excellent Paddy Kenny and the speedy John Riordan tried they simply could not match the Mary's sparkle in a match which deserved a much bigger attendance.

ST MARY'S — S Hennessy, A White, V Cunningham, R Herman, D Wall, G Doyle, S O'Brien, B Keane, D Whitty, D Gillen, K Potts, S Jameson, B Gavin, N McCarthy, D Fanning.

WANDERERS — M Mahon, J Riordan, M Cosgrave, J Duffy, N Machette, M Wyse, B McGoe, B Culliton, E McKeon, G Halpin, N Ridgeway, M O'Neill, J Kenny, P Kenny, K Leahy. Replacements: M Evans for Mahon, R O'Callaghan for Cosgrave.

Referee — M J Bailey.

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE..... 22pts WANDERERS..... 10pts

PHILIP MATTHEWS, still suffering from tonsillitis, was sorely missed as Wanderers fell to their second successive defeat and also possibly out of contention for the league championship.

St. Mary's surprisingly comprehensive victory before an attendance of 1,000 at Templeville Road seemed improbable after a whirlwind Wanderers' start left them leading by 10-4 after twelve minutes.

Inspired by scrum half Brian McGoeys the Wanderers back division manufactured two fine tries by Malcolm Mahon and John Riordan the latter being converted by John Duffy.

However with the possibility of a heavy defeat staring them in the face St. Mary's driven on by the magnificent Noel McCarthy clawed their way back into the game.

A penalty by fullback Steve Hennessy narrowed Wanderers' lead and Mary's got the deserved reward of sustained pressure

when Gearoid Doyle scored under the posts in the 34th minute.

An injury time penalty by Hennessy left the halftime score 18-10 in St. Mary's favour.

The second half was an anti-climax after the exciting first period and the anticipated Wanderers' fightback never materialised.

Another penalty by Hennessy and a try ten minutes from time by Aidan White only served to underline St. Mary's superiority over a Wanderers' team which failed to score in the final seventy minutes.

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE: S. Hennessy, A. White, V. Cunningham, R. Herson (capt.), D. Wall, G. Doyle, S. O'Beirne, B. Keane, D. Whitty, D. Gillen, K. Potts, S. Jameson, B. Gavin, N. McCarthy, D. Fanning.

WANDERERS: M. Mahon, J. Riordan, M. Cosgrave, J. Duffy, N. Metchette, M. Wyse, B. McGoeys, B. Culliton, E. McKeown, G. Halpin, N. Ridgeway, M. O'Neill, J. Kenny, P. Kenny, K. Leahy (capt.). Subs. R. O'Gallagher, M. Evans.