

Shannon put squeeze on Mary's

ST MARY'S 15

SHANNON 16

From Mark Jones at Templeville Road

ST MARY'S: S. Hennessy, A. White, G. Lavin, R. Hernan, A. Gilen, G. Doyle, S. O'Shea, B. Kearney, M. Conboy, D. O'Connell, K. Potts (capt), S. Jameson, D. Fanning, N. McCarthy, B. Pope, Rep: D. Donohue for McCarthy (66), O'Shea, SHANNON: J. Galvin, N. O'Shea, P. Murray (capt), B. Roche, B. O'Shea, J. Hennessy, O. Kelly, P. McLoughlin, P. Kearney, M. Fitzgerald, M. Galway, K. Maher, E. Hennessy, M. Fitzgerald, N. O'Donovan, Rep: M. Allen for McLoughlin (53). REFEREE: S. Hilditch (Ulster).

THIS was not one for the faint-hearted. There were swaying emotions and swaying fortunes as Shannon clawed back a 9-0 first half deficit, lost the lead again and finally won it back for a precious victory which keeps their title hopes alive.

It was really a question of how the cruiserweight would fair against the heavyweight, and although Galway, Maher and O'Donovan finally sappr their opponents' strength, Mary's made a real fight of it.

They looked good for the vital two points midway through the first half as Gearoid Doyle's raking kicks across the blustery wind kept Shannon pinned down. A penalty and a magnificent dropped goal by Steve Hennessy had pushed the home side into a 15-10 lead and Jameson and Potts were still going well at the line out.

But, critically, the Mary's scrum began to feel the pinch. And even a shoulder injury to Pat McLoughlin after an hour could not dent Shannon's supremacy in the scrums. Mary's started to slide back alarmingly.

Shannon were on the move again and those characteristic scuttling runs

around the fringes by Sonny Kiely kept Fanning, Pope and McCarthy guessing.

A sniping break by Kiely, after he had twisted and turned, put Billy O'Shea in the clear but Fanning pulled off a tremendous last ditch tackle. Then, with a quarter of an hour left, Pearce floated away from a ruck and made ground into the Mary's 22 where his progress was halted by a high tackle.

Shannon refused the kick at goal and went for the type of try they manufacture so well. Ten seconds of rough and tumble later and hooker Paddy Kenny had the vital touch down. Pearce punched the air more in relief than elation as Shannon led 16-15.

In the dying minutes St Mary's were fighting not just to win but also to stay in the first division. The defeat leaves them second from the bottom. Their two remaining matches are against Inishman, one place below them, and Cork Constitution, one place above. To avoid the drop it will be dog eat dog. Yesterday, St Mary's showed that they won't be easily muzzle.

Potts let his aggression



Sedn O'Brien, of St Mary's, is tackled by Shannon scrum-half Sonny Kiely

spill over in the early stages and Hilditch had to speak to him three times. The second row late tackled Niall O'Shea right at the start but brother Billy's penalty was hooked wide.

Galvin was then off target with a long range penalty for Shannon before Hennessy opened Mary's account with a beautifully struck kick from the right hand touch line after nine minutes. He then hit a post with a similar effort after

Niall O'Shea had obstructed White.

That frustration was soon forgotten as a packed Templeville Road erupted when Fanning and Potts drove off the back of a scrum to create an excellent try for Jameson. It was the kind of bone crunching rumble that Shannon would secretly have admired. Hennessy converted and it was 9-0 to Mary's after 18 minutes. Billy O'Shea missed another penalty chance

when Dowling was penalised for dropping a scrum, but within minutes Fitzgibbon made a two handed catch at the back of a line out on the Mary's 22 escaped McCarthy's clutches and put Maher in for a try. Pearce, Shannon's third kicker by this time, was wide with the conversion.

The out-half made up for that lapse with a beautiful dropped goal across the breeze after half an hour and he gave Shannon a 10-9

interval advantage with a good penalty after Potts had tackled Fitzgibbon late.

Fitzgibbon was beginning to exert some pressure on the Mary's backs and after a promising double miss move he gunned down White with the kind of impact we are now getting used to. It is a wonder that Vinny Cunningham, a specialist at the game was really that keen to play out-half.

Hennessy kicked a penalty six minutes after the break and then dropped a tremendous goal from 35 metres after Murray had sliced his clearance kick. 15-10 and Mary's were going through a good spell with O'Brien and Doyle linking smoothly at half back.

But their willing scrum and Shannon's sheer will were just too much in the end. One point separated two teams at different ends of the table and that's the nature of this season's All Ireland League.

Murphy to speed up the pace of change

THERE was little surprise about the selection of Noel Murphy as the new manager of the Irish rugby team. He has a strong track record with Ireland, as a captain, coach and selector, and most recently as coach to the U-21 and U-25 sides. He has also played with and coached the Lions.

"We have ground to make up, but so have other countries," Murphy said yesterday. "England have been working very hard on their game and their structures in the last few years, but in the last three or four years we have been putting new structures in place as well."

"Things like the All Ireland League, the Ireland B team having more regular competition, the Ireland U-20 squads and so on. But we have got to accelerate the benefit from these innovations a little. The structures are there but we just have to quicken the pace."

"I'll never accept that we're a Division Two team. We'll always have good years and bad years, good games and bad games. That's the nature of the game in Ireland. We'll have to make sure that we perform better more often."

Murphy's stint as manager of the Lions came in South Africa in 1980 when he joined with Syd Miller who managed the side. Bill Beaumont, who was the captain on that trip, later recalled Murphy's first training session: "As befis an Irishman he got off to a blarneyous start with his opening sentence as coach at the warm-up. 'To do this exercise,' he said, 'it's best to spread out in a bunch.'"

He was recommended to the IRFU Executive by a sub-committee comprising Syd Miller, Ronnie Dawson and Tom Kieran. Murphy is not a member of the Executive, but his new job, which starts with the New Zealand tour, will allow him to attend Executive meetings.

Brendan Fanning



Jameson and Shannon's Pat McGloughlin fail to hold the ball as Mick Fitzgibbon (Shannon) and Brent Pope battle behind during Saturday's game at Templeville Road, Dublin. — (Photograph Joe St Ledger)

Fitzgibbon plays key role in Shannon's stubborn win

IN an outrageous piece of wishful thinking, some misguided supporter passed the word to the Shannon dressingroom that leaders Garryowen were losing with five minutes remaining. The cheers from players and officials almost matched those which, moments earlier, had greeted an extremely tight All-Ireland League win at Templeville Road on Saturday.

One suspected that Shannon had experienced their share of good fortune for one day, without seeking miracles from Dorrad Doyle. Meanwhile, St. Mary's were left to ponder a potential relegation position that owed much to their own discipline.

The match contained some splendid scores, but an especially critical one from Shannon's standpoint came with the last kick of the first half, when Pothall Johnny Pearce landed a 45-yards penalty goal. The score was doubly significant for the fact that it was conceded by St. Mary's skipper Kevin Potts and it gave Shannon the lead for the first time, at 10-9.

Having been guilty of indiscipline earlier in the match, Potts eventually received a protracted warning from Ulster referee Stephen Hilditch for a late tackle on Mick Fitzgibbon. The converted penalty served to lighten the punishment to a very tidy level.

Fitzgibbon, incidentally, went on to

ST. MARY'S.....15
SHANNON.....16

Dermot Gilheese

produce a splendid, all-round performance which became a key factor in Shannon's ultimate forward dominance. It is said that any international worth his salt should excel at club level and the Shannon flanker exuded tremendous confidence, born, no doubt, from recent appearances for Ireland against Wales and England.

Neither side used their backs to any appreciable extent. So the outcome hinged on honest grafting by the respective packs, with St. Mary's performing admirably until the crucial final quarter. As it happened, both teams lost a forward at that stage: Shannon's loose-head prop Pat McGloughlin sustained a dislocated shoulder and, three minutes later, St. Mary's flanker, Noel McCarthy, departed the scene with concussion.

Ultimately it was the superior commitment and resilience of the Shannon forwards which proved to be decisive. Having tapped a penalty award close to the St. Mary's line, Shannon set up a rolling maul from which hooker Paddy Kenny scored a try. Pearce's conversion provided a winning lead.

Conditions were difficult, particularly for place-kicking, with a gusting wind sweeping the pitch diagonally. It was helping Shannon in the first half but they had four missed shots at goal from Billy O'Shea (2), J. J. Galvin and Pearce, before the out all eventually found the target for a half-time lead.

Stephen Hennessy, the St. Mary's full-back, fared considerably better with two penalties and a conversion. But his finest effort was a glorious 45-yards drop goal, hit on a low trajectory from a highly improbable position on the right.

The remaining St. Mary's score was a first-half try by second-row Stephen Jameson, who completed a fine drive move initiated by Declan Fanning and earned on by Potts.

Fitzgibbon had a major role in Shannon's first try, catching cleanly the back of a line-out and then driving through to set up second-row Kieran Maher for the score. Pearce contributed a drop goal, a penalty goal and conversion of Kenny's try.

ST. MARY'S: S. Hennessy, A. White, G. Lavin, G. O'Leary, S. O'Shea, S. Kearney, M. Corry, D. Dowling, K. Potts, S. Jameson, D. Fanning, B. H. McCarthy, Replacement M. Fitzgerald, Replacement McCarthy (15 mins).

SHANNON: J. Galvin, B. O'Shea, P. Morris, Potts, N. O'Shea, J. Pearce, D. Kelly, P. McGloughlin, P. Kenny, M. Fitzgerald, M. Galvin, K. Maher, H. O'Donovan, M. Fitzgerald, Replacement M. Allen for McGloughlin, Referee: S. Hilditch (Ulster).

Important Ballymena victory

Ulster Division
All-Ireland
then Saturday
struggling
Park may
attracted in

BALLYMENA.....9
LANSLOWNE.....6

At that stage the diligent McAleese had been on target twice, Ballymena deserving their 6-0 lead if only because of their better cohesion.

But it was Lansdowne who briefly illuminated what was an otherwise drab encounter in the 37th minute. The hardworking

Paul Ward, well supported by his pack, cleverly worked the ball back from a ruck and when winger John Sexton was eventually fed he breezed in for what proved to be the only try of the match. Outhall Eric Elwood, who managed to match his opposite number McAleese in some respects, added the points to leave the side deadlocked at the interval.

The home side sealed a rather hollow but infinitely welcome vic-

tory 15 minutes from the end. Lansdowne off-side was signalled by referee Rennie McDowell. McAleese stepped up to convert his hat-trick of penalties.

Even then Ballymena could afford to breathe easily. Aherne and then Elwood close with penalty attempts in the end Ballymena just deserved to take another along the route to Divisional survival.

Garryowen pass examination

GARRYOWEN got exactly what they expected from Instonians at Doordoyle - a tough examination. The examination lasted for 55 minutes, at which stage the Northern visitors were 6-3 ahead.

That lead would, indeed, have been 9-3 had Instonians full-back Marty Strutt not seen a penalty eleven minutes into the second half rebound back off an upright.

But, when the really difficult questions were asked of Instonians they were unable to come up with the answers.

Garryowen, having played below their best until then, suddenly moved into top gear.

In a remarkable four-minute spell the match was transformed, with Garryowen scoring fifteen points without reply to lead 18-6. Instonians challenge was well and truly buried.

The Northern side now face the distinct possibility of relegation, while Garryowen remain very much on target to capture the Division One title.

But they will surely acknowledge that a better overall performance

GARRYOWEN.....21 INSTONIANS.....6

By Kieran Rooney

may well be needed in their final two outings, against Cork Constitution (away) and Young Munster (home).

When they were good in the second half they were very good. Their Brent Anderson inspired pack simply took Instonians apart in the final 25 minutes.

Instonians had established a 6-3 interval lead after playing with a strong wind in the opening half.

Full-back Strutt landed two penalties, with his opposite number, Kenny Smith, replying with a penalty for Garryowen.

As the crowd then waited for Garryowen to assume control, it was Instonians who dominated the opening stages of the second period.

Unluckily, though, Strutt saw his penalty goal attempt come back off a post. It was to be Instonians last chance.

Within minutes Philip Danaher had celebrated his return to the Irish side by setting up a try for his International colleague, Richard Wallace. Kenny Smith's conversion put Garryowen 9-6 clear.

The pressure now off, Garryowen began to display the sort of football which had swept Shannon aside.

Smith kicked a penalty and then added the extra points through another fine try by second row Richard Costello following good work from flanker Darraugh O'Sullivan.

A beautifully struck drop goal by Dan Larkin, who once again proved a capable deputy for Nicky Barry at out half, completed the scoring nine minutes from time.

GARRYOWEN - K Smith, R Wallace, P Danaher, capt., D Costello, P Murphy, D Larkin, J Barry, L Lannin, K Wood, D Henshaw, B Anderson, R Costello, M McGuire, B Cronin, D O'Sullivan, Subs: G Manning for D Costello 60 mins.

INSTONIANS - M Strutt, G McCausland, M Wylie, K Crossan, (capt.), B Russell, P Nelson, B McKibbin, A Adair, G Bell, J McKibbin, C Hamilton, J McKeeague, B Cornelius, D Crawford.

Referee: D Templeton (Ulster).

edge out St Mary's

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE.....15 SHANNON.....16

By Sean Ditley

Mick Fitzgerald charged over, festooned with his colleagues, and the all-important conversion kick was

tapped over by Johnny Pearse.

Hennessy had opened affairs with a penalty goal and a conversion of Steve Jameson's driving try to give Mary's their 9-0 lead that lasted well into the first half.

However approaching the half-hour international flanker Mick Fitzgerald, who had an outstanding game, plundered possession at a line-out, carved through and Kieran Maher rounded off the try.

Then Pearse dropped a goal and gave Shannon a rather fortuitous half-time lead when he kicked a penalty goal for an expensive lapse by Kevin Potts.

However Hennessy's two contributions after that, his penalty goal

CORPORATION ALL IRELAND LEAGUE

ALL IRELAND LEAGUE DIVISION ONE

Garryowen	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Shannon	6	4	1	1	78	67	9
Y Munster	7	3	1	2	55	52	7
Ballymore	6	3	1	2	78	74	7
Old Wesley	7	2	1	3	82	73	8
Lansdowne	7	2	0	4	75	102	8
Cork City	6	2	0	4	78	85	4
St Mary's	6	2	0	4	52	85	4
Instonians	6	2	0	4	54	104	4

ALL IRELAND LEAGUE DIVISION TWO

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dungannon.....	7	6	0	1	107	68	12
Garryowen.....	7	5	0	2	128	66	10
Terrinure.....	7	5	0	2	130	82	10
Blackrock.....	7	4	0	3	143	97	8
Wandsworth.....	7	4	0	3	108	97	8
Bangor.....	7	4	0	3	98	110	8
Malone.....	7	3	0	4	132	87	6
Dolphin.....	7	3	0	4	75	102	8
Sunderly W.....	7	1	0	6	81	118	2
CITYS.....	7	0	0	7	81	235	0

LEADING SCORERS (INDIVIDUAL)

N Woods (B'rock)	1	C	DG	PB	Pts
C Dunne (D'sil)....	5	8	0	10	66
M Cunn (Bangor)....	0	8	2	14	64
R Daly (S'W'nd)....	1	8	0	14	58
M Duran (Doh)....	1	3	1	14	55
P Archer (Dung)....	0	2	3	14	55
P Hanrahy (Tra)	1	5	0	11	47
	2	7	0	4	34

LEINSTER SENIOR LEAGUE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Clontarf.....	7	8	0	1	109	80	12
Old Bel.....	7	4	2	1	64	57	10
Monkstown.....	7	4	1	2	66	68	8
Bectra.....	7	3	2	2	71	80	8
UCD.....	7	4	0	3	72	94	8
BLSP.....	7	2	1	4	57	94	5
Dub Univ.....	7	2	0	5	64	82	4
Stretton.....	7	0	0	7	81	125	0

MUNSTER SENIOR LEAGUE

UCD	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Old Cres	7	5	0	2	145	41	10
Bonmahon	8	5	0	1	112	63	10
Highfield	6	3	1	2	82	67	7
Whipart	6	2	1	3	57	58	8
Waterpark	7	0	0	7	59	190	0

Clontarf clinch Leinster crown

OLD BELVEDERE.....7 CLONTARF.....15

CLONTARF clinched the Leinster Senior League with a well deserved eight points victory over Old Belvedere in yesterday's crucial deciding fixture at Ballymore Road.

The foundation stone for the Leinster Senior League was laid in 1901 and a cup was awarded to the winners.

Shannon

THE old dogs for the hard road. For more than half the game at Templeville Road the eager young St. Mary's terriers set the pace but Shannon, with a vengeance, showed them that nothing beats experience.

St. Mary's eager and desperately anxious to keep away from the relegation zone sprawled all over the Shannon park until well into the second half and when they led 15-10 15 minutes into the second half it seemed that the call of the wild was, at last, sounding for Shannon.

An extraordinary drop goal from miles out on the right touchline by fullback Steve Hennessy had given St. Mary's that five points lead. Surely now, their forwards with their tails up and enjoying themselves in Shannon territory they would wrap it up.

Calmly and carefully however Shannon forced their way back to the other end and running a penalty award on the Mary's line the famous old trick.

St. Mary's College R.F.C.



S. HENNESSY	15
A. WHITE	14
G. LAVIN	13
R. HERMAN	12
A. GILLEN	11
G. DOYLE	10
S. O'BEIRNE	9

B. KEANE	1
M. CORCORAN	2
D. DOWLING	3
(CAPTAIN) K. POTTS	4
S. JAMESON	5
D. FANNING	6
N. MCCARTHY	7
B. POPE	8

Subs: N. O'Brien, D. Quigley,
R. Whitty, P. McGill, D. Donaghue.

Referee: S. HILDITCH U.R.S.
Touch Judges:
T. DOYLE L.B.R.U., & T. HORGAN L.B.R.U.



**INSURANCE
CORPORATION
ALL IRELAND
LEAGUE**

Today's game is
kindly sponsored by:

Bank of Ireland
Donnybrook Branch

Manager
Colm O'Doherty

Shannon R.F.C.

15 J. GALVIN
14 N. O'SHEA
13 P. MURRAY (CAPTAIN)
12 B. ROCHE
11 B. O'SHEA
10 J. PEARSE
9 O. KIELEY

1 P. MCGLOUGHLIN
2 P. KENNY
3 M. FITZGERALD
4 M. GALWAY
5 K. MAHER
6 E. HALVEY
7 M. FITZGIBBON
8 N. O'DONOVAN

Subs: R. O'Doherty, B. Clanley,
N. Glynn, I. Farrell, N. Cowley

NEXT LEAGUE MATCH v. Instonians (Away)
Saturday 22 February, 1992
(Contact David Fair re travel arrangements at 934081)

Leadbetter
Shannon 16
15

