

Insurance Corporation League Division One

Saturday 26th February, 1994 – Kick-off: 2.30 p.m.



HOLSTEN Pils



Official Sponsors of St. Mary's College R.F.C. 1992/93

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE R.F.C.

OLD WESLEY R.F.C.

15. Aidan White

Full Backs

15. P. Allen

14. Gareth Halpin

13. Ray Herman

12. Gary Lavin

11. David Wall

Three Quarters

14. N. Farren

13. R. Moloney

12. C. Younger

11. A. Johnston

10. Nicky Barry

9. Steve Tracey

Half Backs

10. A. Hawe

9. D. Jackson

1. Brian Keane

2. Michael Corcoran

3. Derek Gillen

4. Victor Costello

5. Steve Jameson (Capt.)

6. Kevin Potts

7. Kevin Devlin

8. Brent Pope

Forwards

1. H. Hurley

2. S. Mooney

3. J. Feehan

4. D. Bursey

5. G. Duffy

6. C. Pim

7. R. Love (Capt.)

8. N. Johnston

Replacements

R. Whitty

D. Dowling

C. Potts

P. Lynch

A. Gillen

Replacements

J. Kenny

J. Lowry

R. Jackson

N. Kearney

N. Osborne

We thank our physiotherapists Denise Fanagan & Emer Nolan

St Mary's emerge with much relief from the mist

A VERY close encounter, with the spectre of relegation the central theme, ended with St Mary's College gaining the precious two All-Ireland League points at stake at Templeville Road on Saturday.

Mist enveloped the ground for much of a match more interesting than entertaining and, when it was all over, Old Wesley's task of staying in the top division had taken on a new and threatening urgency. They are now in second last place with four points and just two matches to play. St Mary's moved up to join the cluster on the six-points mark and safety now is well within their compass.

The result was received more with relief than jubilation by St Mary's and, their coach, Eddie Wigglesworth, did not disguise that.

"This was in effect a four-point match for both of us. It was a great relief to have won. It eases our problems considerably and takes some of the pressure off us. I know the conditions were difficult, but I did not think it a match of much quality. However there was immense pressure on both sides. We got one try scoring chance and we took it — that in the end was the difference." And so indeed it was.

But Old Wesley will feel, perhaps with some justification, that their efforts warranted at least a point from a match played on a very heavy surface. Yet, bearing in mind the volume of rain that had fallen, that the match was played at all is a tribute to the ground staff.

Old Wesley had reason to regret their inability to use all the good possession they won in the first half more effectively. A 9-3 half-time advantage did not, in the end, prove sufficient for the

ST MARY'S 13
OLD WESLEY 9

Edmund Van Esbeck

needs against a St Mary's pack that did much better after the interval than they had in the initial period.

Nor did it help Old Wesley's cause that they lost their accomplished number eight, Nick Johnston, after 27 minutes. He had been influential in the lineout and other respects before his departure. The point was not lost on Old Wesley's very disappointed coach Ciaran Callan. "Johnston was a considerable loss to us. We could and should have been more than six points ahead at the interval. We really let it slip in a 15 minute-period shortly after the interval."

In fact it was a seven-minute spell that decided the match. Having trailed by those six points at the break, St Mary's cut the deficit when Nicky Barry kicked a penalty in the 44th minute and then fortune smiled on the home side.

They had launched a vigorous assault on the Old Wesley line with scrum, maul, lineout and ruck, but the danger appeared to have been lifted when Niall Farren put in a fine tackle on Steve Jameson on the 25.

However Wesley did not claim the ball in the tackle and St Mary's retained possession. Barry initiated an attack before transferring the ball to centre Gary Lavin, who revealed pace and perception to spot a gap and go through it for the crucial try. Barry kicked a very good conversion and St Mary's led for the first time.

Old Wesley, with their forwards more controlled and accomplished, had much the better

of the initial period. Their back row was very effective with Chris Pim at his vigorous best, while in the lineout Greg Duffy and Johnston had a decided edge. A penalty from Farren after nine minutes gave the visiting side the lead, but Barry, who did some very good defensive and tactical kicking for St Mary's, equalised with a penalty in the 25th minute.

Out-half Adrian Hawe dropped a left-footed goal for Old Wesley in the 29th minute and Farren added a penalty in first-half injury time. Wesley had, too, come within a few inches of scoring a try, but after good work by Colin Younger and Andy Johnston, full-back Paul Allen was knocked into touch in goal at the corner flag.

Then came the fruitful St Mary's period and indeed Gary Halpin seemed likely to get a try shortly before Lavin's decisive initiative. Jameson, in particular, did much to cut down Old Wesley's lineout supremacy and the St Mary's pack generally lifted their game appreciably with Brent Pope and Kevin Potts bringing their talents to bear.

"We face a real relegation battle now," said Callan, but there was no surrender in his words. "We have two matches left and four points to seek. Had we got something from this match, our problems would not be as acute, but our position is by no means lost."

Footnote — A few months ago I offered severe criticism of the St Mary's Press facilities. A concerted effort has been made that has brought vast improvement.

ST MARY'S — A White; G Halpin, R Hernan, G Lavin, D Wall; N Barry, S Treacy; B Keane, M Corcoran, D Gillen, V Costello, S Jameson (capt), K Potts, B Pope, K Devlin.

OLD WESLEY — P Allen; N Farren, R Moloney, C Younger, A Johnston; A Hawe, D Jackson; H Hurley, S Mooney, J Feehan, G Duffy, D Bursey, C Pim, N Johnston, R Love (capt). **Replacement:** A Pim for N Johnston (27 mins).

Referee — G Black (ARLB).

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Brent Pope of St Mary's has his work cut out to advance as he is held by Old Wesley's Chris Pim during the All-Ireland League game at Templeville Road on Saturday. — (Photograph: Alan Betson).