

Costello key for Mary's

23/4/95.

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David Walsh reports

AT the beginning of the Cup campaign, Ciaran Fitzgerald invited the Mary's team to play it as they wished it. The coach didn't want to pressurise a young side which did better than expected in the League but the players reckoned they would like to give it a shot.

Now they're in the last four of the Cup and yesterday they performed with genuine enthusiasm, with even *joie de vivre* and UCD were swept off their feet. The scoreline didn't flatter Mary's who were defeated class to a side unluckily relegated from Division Two.

UCD started without Kerry Mark McCarthy and Greg McConkey and lost John Ryan, Brian Smith and Denis Hickie during the game. Handicaps which weakened the team but do not explain away Mary's dominance. Even with their best side, UCD would have struggled yesterday.

Mary's game is built around Victor Costello, a young No.8 who has recovered well from the trauma of a bad experience with Ireland in Australia last summer. Costello is quick, explosive and has very good hands; an unusual combination of talents in an Irish back rower.

He ran at UCD so often that the students grew pretty fed up at the sight of his towering surges. They had to tackle him but it often two or three of them at-one time and gaps were left for others. Garry Lavin was the chief beneficiary as he picked up three tries.

Darragh O'Mahony was Lavin's direct opponent but could not be blamed as Mary's routinely created the overlap. With Vinnie Cunningham back in harness and Nicky Barry alongside, the midfield handling was always likely to be good.

There was a confidence too about Mary's back play and fullback Gary



RAMPAGING... St Mary's College's Victor Costello bursts his way through the ranks of UCD at Belfield.

Picture: Colin O'Riordan.

Halpin continues to progress. He is a quick and enthusiastic attacker and has become far more assured now than he was at the beginning of the season.

So, too, the young lock Malcolm O'Kelly who has come through again. He enjoyed a whirlwind start to the season, struggled for a time to cope with the attention which his ball winning brought, but he has come back well. Fellows like Steve Jameson, Kevin Potts and Kevin Devlin kept performing and O'Kelly was allowed to re-discover his form.

He was good yesterday, winning a lot of ball and adding pace in the loose but Mary's had many runners and it was only a question of how long it would take them to create the openings.

Twenty five minutes passed before the first try and UCD had to battle to stay in touch.

Mary's breakthrough came after Barry missed with a penalty chance that looked straightforward. As sometimes happens, the team let off the hook momentarily loses concentration and Costello's speed off the back of a scrum created space for Lavin to score in the corner.

Six minutes before the break Mary's big scrum 'hooshed' the students off their own ball and Costello picked up an easy try. Then, right on half-time Shane Buckley duffed a tapped penalty and Lavin was in for his second try.

That was 19-0 to Mary's and the game was over, save for very occasional moments

through a one-sided second half. Philip Lynch and Lavin had Mary's fourth and fifth tries and UCD's efforts to retrieve the game lacked conviction.

They did move well at the end but Halpin made a smashing tackle on his opposite, Tom Maughan. No one would have begrudged the students a try but Mary's weren't in the mood to allow it.

You admired them for that.

UCD — T Maughan, D Hickie, M Farnagan, B Smith, D O'Mahony, S Buckley, M Thorne, M Ennis, A Dorman (capt), T Buckley, H Kos, J Ryan, D Finn, K Spicer, T Murphy. Replacements — J O'Hanlon for Ryan, A Hughes for Smith, D Heagarty for Hickie.

St. Mary's — G Halpin, G Lavin, N Barry, V Cunningham, A McEvoy, F Campbell, P Lynch, B Keane, B Brown, W Bowden, M O'Kelly, S Jameson, K Potts, V Costello, K Devlin (capt). Referee — M Gillick (Lein Assoc).

Easy victory for St Mary's

ALTHOUGH UCD knocked St Mary's out of the Leinster Cup at the quarter final stage last year, by half-time of the rematch at Belfield on Saturday it was clear that we were not going to see a repeat performance as St Mary's swept aside a disjointed College challenge.

The students struggled to contain St Mary's through a dreadful first quarter but when Shane Buckley's attempted quick drop out backfired there was no escape. The ball was moved at speed to newly-returned right wing Gary Lavin and he skipped away from the cover to score in the corner. Nicky Barry added an excellent conversion.

St Mary's, for whom backrow players Victor Costelloe, Kevin Potts and captain Kevin Devlin excelled, now began to turn the screw. In the 34th minute Costelloe came off the back of a scrum to dive over for a try which Barry again converted.

Then just on the stroke of half-time, another error by Buckley, whose play mirrored well the kind of season UCD have had, allowed St Mary's to move the

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ball again to Lavin who crossed over to give St Mary's a 19-0 lead.

Even with the wind at their backs, College could not make an impression, and though captain Andy Donovan, Dennis Finn and Tom Murphy did their best to stem the tide, a try from close in by Mary's scrum half Philip Lynch killed off any remote chance of a fightback.

As College's casualty list lengthened and they were forced to use three replacements, St Mary's could afford to indulge themselves. They saved the best for last and with ten minutes to go a fine passing movement which began on halfway ended with Lavin going over for his third try.

SCORING SEQUENCE: 20 mins, Lavin try, Barry conversion, 7-0; 34 mins, Costelloe try, Barry conversion, 14-0; 40 mins, Lavin try, 19-0; 50 mins, Lynch try 24-0; 70 mins, Lavin try, 29-0.

ST MARY'S: G Halpin, G Lavin, N Barry, V Cunningham, A McEvoy, F Campion, P Lynch, B Keane, B Browne, W Bowden, M O'Kelly, S Jameson, K Potts, K Devlin (capt), V Costelloe.

UCD: T Maughan, D Hickie, M Flanagan, B Smith, D O'Mahony, S Buckley, M Thorn, A Buckley, A Donovan(capt), M Ennis, J Ryan, H Kos, D Finn, T Murphy, K Spicer.

Referee: **M Gillick** (ARLB)