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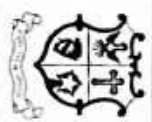


GILBERT MATCH BALL

SPONSOR

RATHDOWN MOTORS

INSURANCE CORPORATION LEAGUE - DIVISION ONE



St. Mary's RFC

15. KEVIN NOWLAN
14. DENIS HICKIE
13. RAY MCILREAVY
12. GARETH GANNON
11. DAVID LYONS
10. CRAIG FITZPATRICK
9. EOIN MCCORMACK
1. BRIAN KEANE (CAPTAIN)
2. BARRY BROWNE
3. EMMET BYRNE
4. STEVE JAMESON
5. KEVIN POTTS
6. MARK REILLY
7. KEVIN DEVLIN
8. VICTOR COSTELLO

SUBSTITUTES

16. CONOR MCGUINNESS, 17. ARTHUR MCEVOY,
18. DAVID BRESLIN, 19. PETER COYLE,
20. MARK CUDDIHY

St. Mary's RFC
IS SPONSORED BY

Firestone

FIRESTONE "MAN OF THE MATCH"
AWARD WILL BE PRESENTED
AFTER THE MATCH.

REFEREE:

Leo Mayne
(ITRA)

SATURDAY
8th February
1997
at 2.30 p.m.

Templeville
Road



Touch Judges:
Noel Butler
(ARLB),
Wayne Sheridan
(ARLB)

Lansdowne RFC

15. RICHARD GOVERNEY
14. MARCUS DILLON
13. ALAN REDDAN
12. KURT McQUILKIN
11. RODY CORRIGAN
10. ERIC ELWOOD
9. DAVID O'MAHONY
1. ENDA BOHAN
2. MARK McDERMOTT
3. ANGUS MCKEEN
4. STEPHEN O'CONNOR
5. PAUL O'CONNOR
6. STEPHEN ROONEY
7. ANDREW DOYLE
8. COLIN MCENTEE

SUBSTITUTES:

16. EOIN CARROLL, 17. ALAN O'SULLIVAN,
18. BOBBIE MCCOY, 19. KEVIN LEWIS,
20. PATRICK FARRELL

RUGBY: Dublin side has strength to go all the way

Lansdowne roar

Brendan Fanning

St Mary's College 13
Lansdowne 19

FOR a change, Lansdowne's pre-season optimism seems justified. With six games played, they are now top of the first division and while they have yet to play Young Munster and Garryowen away, they know they have the character to travel in more than hope.

Moreover, they have won at both venues before, so by this stage they will be aiming to stay on top, rather than merely survive in the top flight.

Yesterday was a difficult one for both teams, with a strong wind blowing straight down the field, but the way rugby is played these days — and the way the laws are structured — it no longer has to be a simple division of a game of two halves.

True, Lansdowne managed 13 points in the first as against just six in the second, but it was never a case of them desperately defending their line for the second 40 minutes.

Instead, their pack did what they had to do — raise their game in the loose — and they continued to do what they had started in the first half at the line-out, where they continually made life difficult for Mary's at the front, where they tend to rely on Steve Jameson when in trouble.

"Our line-out formation was critical", said Lansdowne coaching director Donal Spring. "We had watched their line-out, which was very good all season, on video and we knew we had to do something about it."

What they did was simple enough, placing Paul O'Connor



Driving play: Victor Costello of St Mary's College is tackled by Lansdowne's Eric Elwood at Templeville Road yesterday.

Photographer: Dara MacDonall

in front of Jameson, but on a day when throwing beyond the front was a risky business, it worked particularly well.

The work rate of the Lansdowne forwards was impressive too, with Andy Doyle as effective at the end as he was at the start, and behind the pack, new boy Alan O'Sullivan settled well on his first full league match.

Having made the switch from flanker to scrum-half, in search of personal progress, O'Sullivan might have thrown his hat at it when he was dropped from the second team two weeks ago.

After yesterday's lucky break, when he took over from the "flu-stricken" David O'Mahony, he will feel it was all worth it. It was O'Sullivan's tackle on

Craig Fitzpatrick in injury time which yielded the insurance penalty from Eric Elwood but more importantly it typified the Lansdowne attitude. Into the

minutes later, Elwood landed a second penalty after 20 minutes but it was not until the last play of the first half that Lansdowne carried out a lead worth defending.

an Eric Elwood penalty after five minutes, before international wing Dennis Hickie flew in for a try after a fine burst and pass from Victor Costello seven

minutes later. Elwood landed a second penalty after 20 minutes but it was not until the last play of the first half that Lansdowne carried out a lead worth defending.

After sustained pressure in the Mary's 22, Elwood finally got some space and floated a good pass wide to Marcus Dillon, who scuttled in at the corner. Elwood's conversion left it 13-5 to the visitors and set them up for the second period.

But by 58 minutes the sides were level. First Fitzpatrick closed the gap with a penalty, after Lansdowne killed a promising Mary's move in their own 22, and then the home side went for route one after Lansdowne had thrown crooked at a line-out. The first scrum was disrupted but on the second, it was Costello doing what he does best from close range.

With plenty of time left, Mary's might have thought that their position at the top would be retained but instead, their best chance of taking the lead came just a couple of minutes later, and it was undone by referee Leo Mayne, who blew for a forward pass after Eoin McCormack had floated a lovely effort over the top to Ray McIlreavy who was in space and had David Lyons outside him.

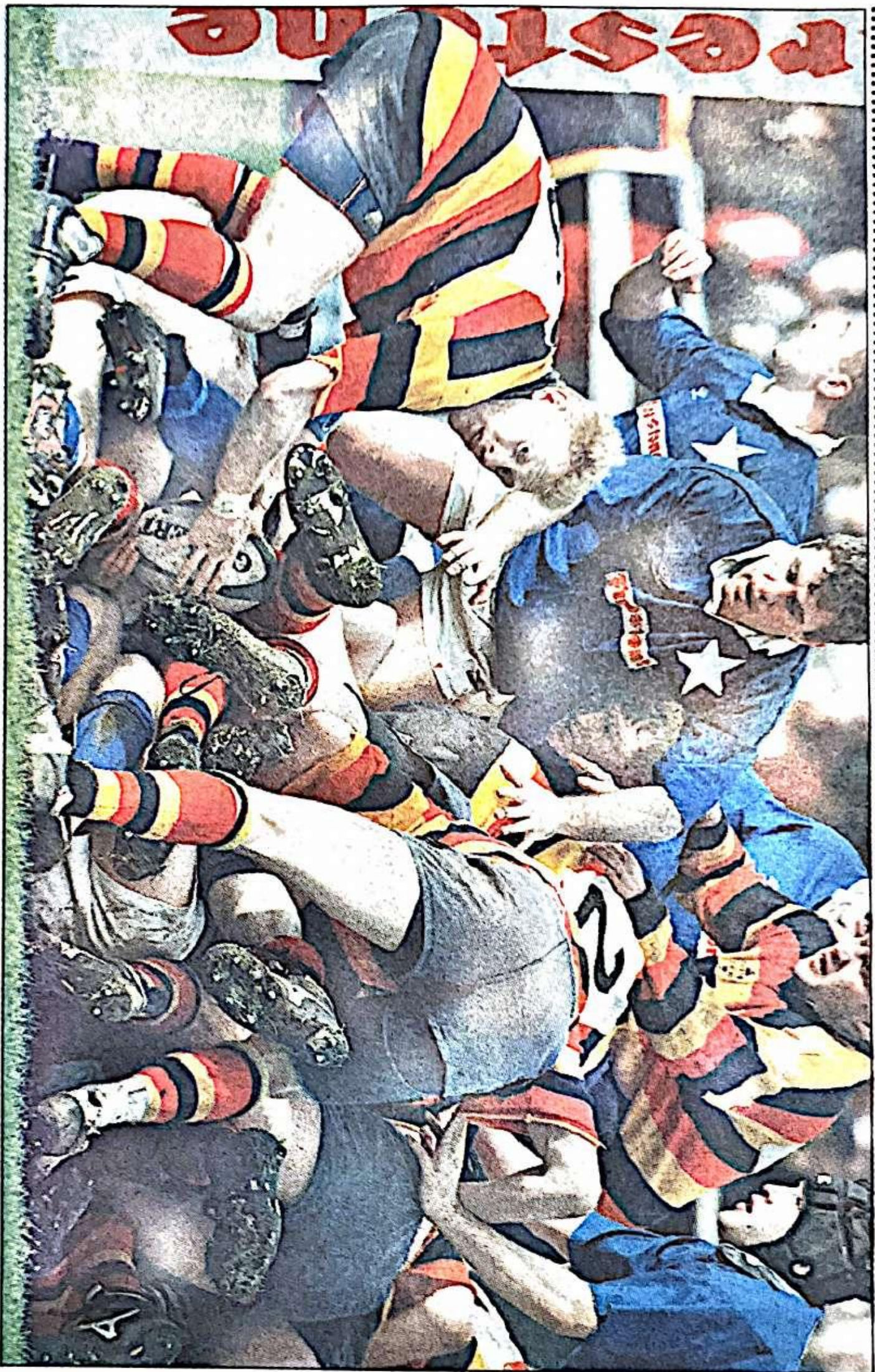
After that Mary's spent too much time defending precarious line-outs. When they lost one in their own 22, and then conceded a penalty after Doyle took the ball up well off Elwood, the latter made it 16-13 to Lansdowne. And they didn't sit back. The pressure was pretty much relentless until Elwood's final penalty, greeted seconds later by the final whistle.

St Mary's: K. Kavanagh, D. Hickie, R. McIlreavy, G. Gannon, D. Lyons, C. Fitzpatrick, A. O'Sullivan, B. Keane, D. Doyle, B. Byrne, E. Jameson, K. Pike, M. Barry, V. Costello, K. Davis, R. Fitzgerald, C. McCormack, 66 minutes.

Lansdowne: R. Gormley, M. Dillon, A. Redden, K. McGilnair, R. Gormley, E. Elwood, A. O'Sullivan, E. Byrne, M. McCormack, C. Dillon, A. McKenna, S. O'Connor, P. O'Connor, S. Barry, C. Wickham, A. Doyle.

Referee: L. Mayne (Dublin).





Lansdowne's Alan O'Sullivan prepares to release a pass from a ruck under his posts in the All Division 1 match at Templeville Road

Photo: INPHO/Billy Stickland