

St Mary's make hard work of it

HOW deeply disconcerting St Mary's can be. They manoeuvre a team into submission, let them off the hook and then almost finish them off before allowing them back in with a winning opportunity.

The Donnybrook surface suited the runners and the game offered up seven tries, three of them, thanks to Old Wesley's Rory Maloney and St Mary's John McWeeney, were outstanding.

But it was the St Mary's back row that coach Ciaran Fitzgerald singled out for particular praise after the match. "I was very impressed with the back row especially Victor. But Wesley were the hungrier team in the second half and we were content to let them run at us.

"We had the points on the board so we defended our lead and shut up shop. It's dangerous to do that against a team with it's back to the wall in relegation zone."

St Mary's first try arrived when a quick tap penalty by scrum half Conor McGuinness right in front of the Wesley goal sent McWeeney on a run. When he was grounded near the line Gareth Gannon was there to pick up and go over unopposed. Along with: Conor Fitzpatrick's two penalties, the visitors found themselves 0-11 up and not a care in the world.

Then up popped Maloney.

OLD WESLEY 24 ST MARY'S COLLEGE.. 28

Johnny Watterson

David Bursay made the initial bullish drive giving Hawe the opportunity of a skip pass to the wing where Maloney galloped in.

Inspired by that score, Maloney continued in the same vein seven minutes later. Carving through the heart of the scattered Wesley de-

fence the centre travelled a full 40 yards and finished with a neat side step before pulling up in agony clasping his hamstring. A brave hobbling drive over the final two yards earned him the try before he was finally helped off the pitch with Wesley 14-11 ahead.

It was then McWeeney's turn to show his turn of pace as Wesley's defence, which regularly opened invitingly, whenever St Mary's moved the ball quickly, again failed to close down the space.

Ballymena secure future

BALLYMENA removed any last element of doubt about their Division One status for next season when they scored another fine away victory, over Young Munster at Clifford Park on Saturday.

However, a fourth successive home defeat for Young Munster — they did not score in the second half — still leaves them with some work to do if they are to avoid the drop.

Ballymena, who had helped to end the championship hopes of Lansdowne a week previously, picked up where they had left off on that occasion. With Paul McBride, Gary Longwell and especially number eight and captain, Dean McCartney in great form up

YOUNG MUNSTER 6 BALLYMENA 19

front, they took the battle to Young Munster from the kick-off.

It came as no surprise when the pressure told in the shape of a Derek McAleese try after 11 minutes.

Even though Aidan O'Halloran hit back with a penalty for Young Munster after 17 minutes, Ballymena regained control when they drove over the Young Munster line and McCartney was accredited with the touchdown.

O'Halloran kicked his second penalty on 41 minutes to renew home hopes, but the score failed

Kevin Nowlan sent him chasing down the right before McWeeney, against the odds, chased down a speculative grubber kick, again from Nolan, to swing the game again.

At half-time, and the score at 14-23, it was critical that Wesley score first to gain a foothold. Hawe was used to kick to the corners and he did so with accuracy. But from there Wesley simply did not have the pack or the inventiveness to pierce the St Mary's

to ignite the anticipated second half revival.

Instead, Ballymena remained in command, and while the exchanges were rarely bright or entertaining, that hardly bothered the visitors, who cruised home thanks to three penalty goals by full-back Ray McIlmoye.

SCORING SEQUENCE: 11 mins: D McAleese try, 0-5; 17: A O'Halloran pen, 3-5; 33: D McCartney try, 3-10; 41: O'Halloran pen, 6-10; 46: R McIlmoye pen, 6-13; 74: McIlmoye pen, 6-16; 80: McIlmoye pen, 6-19.

YOUNG MUNSTER: P Boland; J Carey, M Lynch, N O'Meara, N McManara; A O'Halloran, J Moloney; J Fitzgerald, Mark Fitzgerald, Mick Fitzgerald, D O'Meara, M O'Halloran, D Cloness, G Earls, A Herlihy.

BALLYMENA: R McIlmoye; P Rogers, S Coulter, M Ranney, J Topping; D McAleese, M Beattie; N McKernan, S Ritchie, R Irwin, P McBride, G Longwell, A Graham, A Simpson, D McCartney.

Referee: G Black (Leinster).

line.

Instead winger David Lyons received the ball on the left from a scrum five yards out. Again there was a sizable hole and on the 49th minute that's where he ran, extending St Mary's lead to 14-28.

It was the visitor's fourth try and it signalled the end of Old Wesley's doomed comeback. Their subsequent furious finish, however, was more the corpse twitching than the bristling energy of a side who could sense victory.

Hawe kicked a penalty and then converted when Shane Gill drove over before the referee finally blew, ensuring St Mary's league table position a point behind leaders Shannon.

Old Wesley must now meet Lansdowne, Garryowen and Young Munster away with Ballymena at home in their final four games.

Scoring Sequence: 3 mins: C Fitzpatrick penalty 0-3; 11: G Gannon try 0-6; 20: C Fitzpatrick penalty 0-11; 23: R Maloney try, A Hawe conversion 7-11; 29: R Maloney try, A Hawe conversion 14-11; 34: J McWeeney try 14-16; 40: J McWeeney try, K Nowlan conversion 14-23; 46: D Lyons try 14-28; 61: A Hawe pen 17-28; 80: S Gill try, A Hawe conversion 24-28.

OLD WESLEY: C Hoey (capt), A Leeson, R McNaughton, R Maloney, R Casey, A Hawe, J Kenrick; R Jackson, D Quinn, M Cox, S Gill, G Duffy, C Pim, D Bursay, M Higginson. **Replacements:** C Younger for Maloney 30 mins.

ST MARY'S: K Nowlan, J McWeeney, E Gibney, G Gannon, D Lyons; C Fitzpatrick, C McGuinness; B Keane (capt), B Browne, E Byrne, D Bourke, S Jameson, M Reilly, V Costello, M Cuddy. **Replacements:** K Potts for Burke 62 mins; P Gilbourne for Fitzpatrick 79 mins.

Referee: G Crothers (Ulster Branch)

Marty's seize second spot

OLD WESLEY **24**

ST MARY'S **28**

David McKechnie
Donnybrook

HALF TIME sympathies were with the score-keeper yesterday afternoon, whose interval cramp must have been quite something. It was 23-14 to the visitors at that point, and the match was so open that another hatful of scores seemed inevitable. As it was, St Mary's three first half tries proved just about enough.

Gareth Cannon got their

first one after twelve minutes, a fair reflection of the way the game began. Somehow, Wesley got their act together, however, and Rory Moloney steamed home for a try on 23 minutes. Six minutes later they were in front. Moloney darted through a hole in the St Mary's midfield, somehow shook off one, two, three tackles, pulled a hamstring, grimaced, and landed in the corner.

St Mary's pounded back, and John McSweeney's brace of tries at the end of the first half did their best to end the contest. They didn't, and

Shane Gill's try deep into injury time was scant reward for a full-blooded second half Wesley performance. St Mary's meanwhile move up to second, but fail to convince.

SCORING SEQUENCE

4 mins: C Fitzpatrick pen 0-3; **12 mins:** G Cannon try, 0-8; **22 mins:** C Fitzpatrick pen 0-11; **23 mins:** R Moloney try, A Have con 7-11; **29 mins:** R Moloney try, A Have con 14-11; **34 mins:** J McSweeney try 14-16; **41 mins:** J McSweeney try, K Nowlan con 14-23; **49 mins:** D Lyons try, 14-28; **62 mins:** A Have pen 17-28; **84 mins:** S Gill try, A Have con 24-28

OLD WESLEY: C Hoey, A Leeson, R McNaughton, R Moloney, R Casey, A Have, J Keneflick, R Jackson, D Quinn, M Cox, S Gill, G Duffy, C Plm, D Bursey, M Higginson. Subs: C Younger for Moloney (29 mins)

ST MARY'S: K Nowlan, J McSweeney, E Gibney, G Cannon, D Lyons, C Fitzpatrick, C McGuinness, B Keane, B Browne, E Byrne,

St Mary's in ascendancy

FOR a while it looked like St Mary's would have it all their own way, in a game that held high stakes for both sides. But the gap in the table between the two sides was accurately reflected in the quality of play, though Old Wesley did briefly threaten an upset towards the end.

In truth the close scoreline didn't quite reflect the difference in class between the two sides. Indeed the home side managed to take the lead, half an hour into the match, due to the exceptional pace and footwork of Rory Maloney in the centre. Gathering the ball just inside his own half, Maloney made the 40 metres or so on his own and despite pulling his hamstring in the final drive made it over the line to give his side a 14-11 lead.

Conor Fitzpatrick had landed a penalty for St Mary's after 10 minutes. Gareth Gannon was then sharp to the pick-up when John McWeeney had made good ground and was tackled close to the Old Wesley line. Gannon's task of gathering off the ground and leaping over gave St Mary's an 8-0 lead before Fitzpatrick again found accuracy from the boot.

Maloney had to be replaced after his try-scoring run, a desperate blow for Old Wesley.

The following ten minutes saw St Mary's run in two exceptional tries with right-wing McWeeney illustrating blistering pace on both occasions to take his side to half-time 14-23 ahead.

It was critical at that stage that following half-time that Old Wesley find a higher

Johnny Watterson

Old Wesley	24
St Mary's College	28

tempo, which they tried with fly-half Adrian Hawe kicking to the corners. But the finish was nowhere to be seen.

Rather it was St Mary's who effectively put an end to the fleeting threat. A scrum five yards from the Old Wesley line was quickly spun out to David Lyons on the left wing, who romped over untouched for what was then a 14-point advantage with almost 50 minutes played.

Old Wesley did not roll over, however, but slowly gained ground. Hawe landed a penalty and Shane Gill drove over strongly for a try which Hawe converted to bring the sides to 24-28.

But, in fairness Old Wesley's scores never looked more than some late compensation, but the final score won't give them any heart as the defeat sends them hastening towards relegation.

St Mary's jump over Lansdowne into second place with thirteen points, three points behind Shannon.

Old Wesley: C Hoey (capt); A Leeson, R McNaughton, R Maloney (C Younger 30min), R Casey, A Howe, J Kenesick, R Jackson, D Quinn, M Cox, S Gill, G Duffy, C Pim, D Bursey, M Higginson.

St Mary's: K Nolan; J McWeeney, E Gibney, G Gannon, D Lyons; C Fitzpatrick (P Gilborne 79), C McGuinness; B Keane (capt), B Browne, E Byrne, D Bourke (K Potts 62), S Jamieson, M Riley, V Costello, M Cuddihy.

Scorers: Old Wesley: Tries R Maloney (2), S Gill. Pen: A Hawe; Con: A Hawe (3).

St Mary's College: Tries: J McWeeney (2), G Gannon, D Lyons. Pen: C Fitzpatrick (2). Con: C Fitzpatrick.

Referee: G Crothers (Ulster).

Insurance Corporation All Ireland League Division One

Donnybrook: OLD WESLEY 24 (R Moloney 2 tries, 5 Gill try, A Hawe 3 cons, pen) ST MARY'S COLLEGE 28 (J McSweeney 2 tries, Gannon, D Lyons tries, C Fitzpatrick 2 pens, K Bowlan con)

Stradbroke: BLACKROCK COLLEGE 15 (E Farrell, N Assaf tries, D Lynagh pen, con) DUNGANNON 21 (M Galwey, K Maher tries, A Thompson pen, con, J Galvin dr gl)

Booradale: GARRYOWEN 19 LANSLOWNE 15

Clifford Park: YOUNG MUNSTER 6 (A O'Halloran 2 pens) BALLYMENA 19 (D McArdese, D McCartney tries; R Mdlmoyle 3 pens)

Anglesea Road: OLD BELVEDERE 7 (N Francis try; W Treacy con) CORK CON 18 (C Twomey try; J Murray try; R O'Gara 2 pens, con)

Stevenson Park: DUNGANNON 26 (K McGarry 4 pens, 2 cons, M Patton, M Beggs tries) Old Crescent 21 (S Tuohy try, 2 pen, A O'Dwyer, D Bowles tries) HT 16-3

Lakelands Park: TERENCE COLLEGE 63 (C de Gascun 3 tries, D Coleman 4 tries, N Hogan try, G Dempsey try, pen, 5 cons, C Clarke try) INSTONIANS 11 (S Bond 2 pen, K Hill try)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Shannon.....	9	8	0	1	247	138	16
St Mary's Coll.....	9	6	1	2	210	172	13
Lansdowne.....	9	6	0	3	234	117	12
Terence Coll.....	9	6	0	3	219	140	12
Garryowen.....	9	6	0	3	242	204	12
Blackrock Coll.....	9	6	0	3	179	141	12
Ballymena.....	9	5	0	4	152	182	10
Cork Con.....	8	4	1	4	178	162	9
Dungannon.....	9	3	0	6	218	229	6
Old Crescent.....	9	3	0	6	157	190	6
Old Belvedere.....	9	3	0	6	158	216	6
Young Munster....	9	3	0	6	150	208	6
Old Wesley.....	9	2	0	7	122	208	4
Instonians.....	9	1	0	8	124	290	2

Next fixtures: (22 Mar) Ballymena v Garryowen, Cork Con v Blackrock, Instonians v Dungannon, Lansdowne v Old Wesley, Old Crescent v Young Munster, Shannon v Terence Coll, St Mary's v Old Belvedere

FREE: Collegians

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Buccaneers.....	8	7	1	0	181	94	15
Galwegians.....	9	7	1	1	165	90	15
Portadown.....	8	6	0	2	260	111	12
Bohemians.....	8	6	0	2	184	84	12
UCD.....	9	5	1	3	144	171	11
Queen's Univ.....	8	4	0	4	127	133	8
Corinthians.....	9	3	1	5	127	136	7
Collegians.....	8	3	0	5	106	167	6
Dublin Univ.....	9	2	0	7	162	257	4
Bangor.....	8	1	0	7	89	229	2
Waterpark.....	8	0	0	8	98	171	0

Next fixtures: (22 Mar) Collegians v Corinthians, Bangor v Bohs, QUB v Waterpark, Portadown v Buccaneers, DU v UCD, Free: Galwegians

STATISTICS

(before yesterday's games)

Try scorers:

6 J Culhane (Boh), D Finn (UCD)
5 B Rigney (Buc), D Reddan (Gal)
4 S McKinty (Bgr), J Sharp (UCD), J Cunningham (DU), M Ericson (Por)
3 J Screene (Buc), G Heaslip (Gal), A Matchett, D McKay, G McCluskey (Por), A Hood (QU)

Point scorers:

106 S Laing (Por)
74 M Benson (Boh)
52 R Ormonde (UCD)
50 A White (Cor)
54 K Barrett (Gal)
45 I Quigley (DU), 41 R Lee (Buc), 40 B Hall (QU), 30 J Culhane (Boh), D Finn (UCD), 28 R Collins (Col), 25 D Reddan (Gal), B Rigney (Buc), J Murphy (Wpk), 20 S McKinty (Bgr), J Sharp (UCD), J Cunningham (DU), M Ericson (Por)

Most points in game: 22, S Laing (Por) v Coll

Most tries in game: 3, D Finn (UCD) v Bangor

Biggest score: 77, Portadown v Collegians

Biggest winning margin: 62, Portadown v Collegians

Division Four

Canal Bank: RICHMOND 44 (T Tierney 2 tries, M Halpin 2 tries, K McNamara, D Flynn, A McCarthy tries, T Tierney pen, 3 cons) UCG 6 (T Tierney 2 tries)