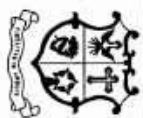


# ST. MARY'S COLLEGE RFC IS SPONSORED BY

**Firestone**

## AIB LEAGUE - DIVISION ONE



**St. Mary's College RFC**

15. KEVIN NOWLAN
14. JOHN MCWEENEY
13. RAY MCILREAVY
12. GARETH GANNON
11. DENIS HICKIE
10. CRAIG FITZPATRICK
9. CONOR MCGUINNESS
1. RONAN LYNCH
2. BARRY BROWNE
3. PETER COYLE
4. STEVE JAMESON (Capt.)
5. FRANK FITZGERALD
6. TREVOR BRENNAN
7. MARK REILLY
8. VICTOR COSTELLO

### SUBSTITUTES

16. EGIN MCCORMACK, 17. RICHARD ORMOND,
18. PADDY POWER, 19. WARRICK BOWDEN,
20. COLEMAN MCCARTHY, 21. A. N. OTHER

REFEREE:  
B. Smith  
(MRS)

SATURDAY  
28th March  
1998  
at 2.30 p.m.

Templeville  
Rcad



TOUCH JUDGES:  
P. Fagan  
(ARLB),  
J. Gannon  
(ARLB)

**Dolphin RFC**

15. COLM MaccOTTIR
14. DENIS O'DOWD
13. BARRY O'NEILL
12. CIAN MAHONY
11. ROBERT O'DONOVAN
10. JOHN O'MAHONY
9. KEITH MURPHY
1. PHILIP SCOTT (Capt.)
2. TERENCE KINGSTON
3. EDDIE KNOWLES
4. JOHN FORDE
5. HUGH FARRELLY
6. TIM O'CONNELL
7. DAVE POMEROY
8. STEVE JACKSON

### SUBSTITUTES:

16. PAUL BUCKLEY, 17. MICHAEL O'DONOVAN,
18. DAMIEN BYRNE, 19. MICK ORMOND,
20. JOHN O'CONNELL, 21. RITCHIE POWER

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# St Mary's almost lose the plot

TIME and again this season St Mary's have drawn hardship on themselves and yesterday they did so again. At times they looked so comfortable that it seemed they would win with ease, but they threw away a 13-point lead and were forced to scramble around for the last 17 minutes in search of a winning score, which only arrived at the death.

It was a galling defeat for Dolphin, who had played so well in the last half an hour to take the lead and then defend it vigorously. The upshot, however, is that they now fall into one of the three automatic relegation places with one round of matches to go. For St Mary's the consequences of their victory and Ballymena's

defeat is that they have cemented the fourth play-off spot, two points ahead of Ballymena with a 15-point superior points difference.

Dolphin needed to do much more with the wind in the first half, even though they started brightly enough. They should have had a try after 12 minutes when Cian Mahony broke through with men over, but he delayed the pass a moment too long.

Then midway through the half Dolphin were concussed by two splendid Mary's tries in a minute. John McWeeney got the first with a beautiful weaving run but the next was even better. Gareth Gannon broke from inside his own half, Kevin Nowlan took it on with a

## Denis Walsh

|                   |    |
|-------------------|----|
| St Mary's College | 36 |
| Dolphin           | 32 |

lovely acceleration before Denis Hickie finished with a withering dash to the line. Mary's have visited defeat by a thousand cuts by a few teams this season and it seemed as if Dolphin would be another victim.

The visitors, however, gathered themselves and surged again. Ten minutes before the break Denis O'Dowd wriggled through a couple of meek tackles in the Mary's midfield and with Barry O'Neill's conversion they only trailed by four points at the break, 17-13.

Twice in the first 10 minutes of the second half St Mary's stretched their lead with tries from McWeeney and Frank Fitzgerald, but both times Dolphin responded. Mahony, whose influence grew in the second half, galloped in for an intercept try and entering the final quarter Robert O'Donovan got over after a brilliant drive. Colm MacCoitir converted superbly into the wind from the touchline.

Astonishingly, four minutes later they were in front. A relentless, rumbling 80-metre drive up the short side finally forced a dubious penalty in front of the posts. They ran it again and a porous Mary's defence yielded another try, this time to MacCoitir.

Mary's exerted constant pressure in the closing stages but it wasn't until they set Hickie free in the last minute that they rescued themselves. He received the ball in space and skinned his man to the corner.

Close. So close.

St Mary's College: K Nowlan, J McWeeney, R McInerney, G Gannon, D Hickie, C Fitzpatrick, C McGinness, R Lynn, B Browne, P Coyne, S Jameson (capt), F Fitzgerald, T Brennan, M Reilly, V Costello (C McCarthy, 53 min).

Dolphin: C MacCoitir, R O'Donovan, D O'Dowd, B O'Neill, M O'Donovan (B Sheehan, 42 min), C Mahony, K Murphy (P Buckley, 7 min), P Scott (capt), T Kingston, E Knowles, J Frode, H Farrelly, T O'Connell, D Pomeroy, S Jackson.

Scorers: St Mary's College: Tries: McWeeney (2), Hickie (2), Fitzgerald, Conn Fitzpatrick (4), Pen: Fitzpatrick, Delphin: Tries: O'Dowd, Mahony, R O'Donovan, MacCoitir. Con: O'Neill, MacCoitir (2), Pears: O'Neill (2). Referee: B Smith (Munster).

# Hickie wings in to save St Mary's

## Grant Robbins

**St Mary's College.....36**  
**Dolphin.....32**

A FANTASTIC match and one which gave every St Mary's supporter chronic palpitations as Denis Hickie's last-minute try contrived to secure a nerve-jangling victory and surely a place in the AIB play-offs next month.

In the end the players had flogged themselves to a standstill, by which time St Mary's had just about done enough. It should, though, have never got that close.

Steve Hennessy, the St Mary's coach, had a look of bewilderment on his face as Bertie Smith blew the final whistle: "How we won that one, I'll never know," he said. "We should have had the game won at 31-18 midway through the second half but at the end Dolphin probably deserved to win. I honestly didn't think we were going to do it."

Hennessy pinpointed a lack of composure and loss of control which allowed Dolphin to almost snatch an improbable victory.

Dolphin will feel savaged, for they contributed massively to a superlative game. The two back-rows flung themselves into everything with intelligence and passion, but for all the efforts of Dave Pomeroy and Co, they were eclipsed by the trio of Trevor Brennan, Mark Reilly and a somewhat subdued Victor Costello.

Both sides are possessed of players with wonderful handling, and at times some of the hand-to-hand stuff was thrilling, some passages leaving the 1,500 crowd breathless.

There were some fabulous moments from St Mary's, not least a spectacular two-try spell midway through the first period: the first from John McWeeney and the second by Denis Hickie. It ensured the home side led 17-13 at the turn-around.

Barry O'Neill, with two deftly struck penalties, and Craig Fitzpatrick, with one, had traded kicks before the St Mary's out-half's wonderful hands released McWeeney, who weaved his way through two defenders to score under the posts,

Fitzpatrick converting.

From the kick-off, St Mary's stretched their advantage to 17-6, Kevin Nowlan's speed carrying him past the cover defence, before Hickie exploded onto Gareth Gannon's incisive pass to touch down. Fitzpatrick added the points.

But on the half hour, Denis O'Dowd reduced the arrears with a well-worked try as the St Mary's defence opened up, which O'Neill converted to leave his side trailing by just four points at the interval.

The two sets of forwards appeared evenly matched but Dolphin were the more abrasive. Frank Fitzgerald, however, scored St Mary's fourth try of the afternoon after McWeeney had been stopped inches short of the line, before the burly lock forward ploughed over from close range.

A sustained spell of driving down the right brought two tries in quick succession for the visitors, first Robert O'Donovan and then Colm MacCoitir crashed over and from being dead and buried, Dolphin now led 32-31 with just six minutes left.

It produced a frantic finale, but just as it looked as if Hennessy and his supporters would need emergency medical treatment, Hickey popped up on the end of a sweeping movement with the clock showing time to win the match.

St Mary's: K Nowlan; J McWeeney, R McIlreevey, G Gannon, D Hickie; C Fitzpatrick, C McGuinness; R Lynch, B Browne, P Coyle, S Jameson (Capt.), F Fitzgerald, T Brennan, M Reilly, V Costello (C McCarthy 53 mins)

Dolphin: C MacCoitir; R O'Donovan, D O'Dowd, B O'Neill (R Keheller 71 mins., temp.), M O'Donovan (B Sheehan 42 mins); C Mahoney, K Murphy (P Buckley 79 mins.); P Scott (capt), T Kingston, B Knowles, J Forde, H Farrelly, T O'Connell, D Pomeroy, S Jackson.

Referee: B Smith (Munster).

**Shannon.....37**  
**Blackrock College.....6**

THREE times champions Shannon will hardly ever have it as easy as this. They ran in five tries without reply against a very poor Blackrock College side at Thomond Park yesterday to clinch their place at the top of the table.

This they have done now for each of the past four years but because of the new format in the competition they must now participate in the knockout stages.

On this form they should have

little to worry about. They never gave Blackrock a serious look-in even though the opening 20 minutes was scoreless.

Shannon's Andrew Thompson for Shannon and Blackrock's Alan McGowan exchanged penalties to get the scoreboard moving and then Mick Galwey demonstrated his brilliant footballing brain when he kicked through to set up a try for John Lacey which Thompson converted.

Thompson then got in for a try of his own to make it 15-3 at half time and even though Blackrock pressed early in the second half and reduced their arrears with a McGowan penalty it was one way traffic as Jim Galvin, Eddie Halvey and John Lacey again went in for tries two of which were converted by Thompson who also kicked a penalty.

Shannon: J Hayes (W O'Shea); J Lacey, A McGrath (P McMahon), R Ellison, A Thompson; J Galvin, F McNamara (G Russell); M Horan (J Hayes), M McDermot, N Healy; M Galwey, K Keane (C McMahon); A Quinlan, E Halvey, A Foley.

Blackrock: T Keating; P Dunne, B Carey, D Quinlan, A Guinan; A McGowan, N Assaf; D Kavanagh, S Byrne, F Flavin; J Ryan, H Kos; D Moore, T Goldfinch, L Cullen.

Ref: D Mene (France).

**Cork Constitution.....63**  
**Old Belvedere.....12**

ANY notions that Old Belvedere had of producing a shock result were well and truly crushed as Cork Con produced a blistering second half performance at Temple Hill yesterday. Con looked the better side throughout the first half but Belvedere competed strongly and were well in the contest until a late try gave Con a 17-7 interval lead.

Winger John Kelly led the Con scoring charge with a hat-trick of tries. Brothers Jerry and Niall Murray each scored twice and Joey Lawlor, Dave O'Brien and Ian Doyle had one apiece.

Constitution's strong scrum forced Belvedere to concede a penalty try and it was as well for them that Ronan O'Gara left his kicking boots at home. O'Gara kicked four conversions but missed eight further kicks at goal.

Relegated Belvedere did score an excellent try from Steve Sexton, which Billy Treacy converted early in the game but they had to wait