



Munsters tamed

Kieran Rooney

St Mary's.....13
Young Munster.....7

ST MARY'S managed just one try and were on the back foot for practically all of the second half at Templeville Road yesterday but this was rightly seen as a huge victory in their bid to make the AIB League play-offs.

Ahead 13-0 at the interval, they looked like coasting to victory. Instead, it was Young Munster who took control in the second half, forcing St Mary's to defend desperately in the closing stages. At the finish, St Mary's were relying on sheer character. If it wasn't the most flowing of matches for Irish coach Brian Ashton to view, St Mary's skipper Steve Jameson described it as superb to play in.

"We did our best to lose it after dominating the first half. And at the end of the day the pack had to dig very deep," insisted Jameson. "I asked the pack for 100 per cent and that's what I got. Young Munster are a very spirited side and they came back well but this victory was about the sheer heart shown by our pack."

Not surprisingly, given the fierce rivalry between the two sides, the game refereed by South Africa's Andre Watson had its fair share of flare-ups but it never really got out of hand. Irish coach Brian Ashton must have been impressed with some of St Mary's first half efforts, in particular the early work of Victor Costello and a try by Denis Hickie.

Switched to his international spot on the left-wing, Hickie took a pass from centre Gareth Gannon to race 20 metres into the corner. Out-half Fergal Campion's conversion gave St Mary's their 13-0 advantage two minutes before the break.

Campion, who had landed two earlier penalties, wasted a good opportunity to put 16 points between the sides just before the break. Still, with St Mary's well in control, it hardly seemed to matter.

But Young Munster took control as mistakes crept into St Mary's game and the Limerick side were rewarded with a try from prop Des Clohessy 19 minutes after the break. Out-half Stephen Tuohy's conversion reduced the deficit to 13-7.

Although St Mary's brought on international scrum-half Conor McGuinness and Leinster flanker Trevor Brennan as substitutes, the opportunity was now there for Young Munster to go on and win the game. That they didn't was down to their inability to translate intense late pressure into scores and some heroic St Mary's defence.

No one was better than flanker Mark Cuddihy. He made a series of great tackles, including one which stopped Young Munster full-back Peter Boland from breaking through.

St Mary's: K Nowlan, J McWeeney, R McIlreavy, G Gannon, D Hickie, F Campion, E McCormack (C McGuinness 49); E Byrne, B Browne, P Coyle (D Dowling 77), S Jameson (capt), P Sullivan (T Brennan 59), M Reilly, V Costello, M Cuddihy.

Young Munster: P Boland, J Carey (A O'Halloran 57), N O'Meara, M Lynch, N McNamara (D Walsh 39), S Tuohy, D Tobin, N Hartigan, M Hayes, D Clohessy, D O'Meara, M O'Halloran, B Buckley, A Heilthy, G Earls.
Referee: A Watson (S Africa)



Two to one: Steve McIvor and Andrew Birmingham of Garryowen bring down Clontarf's Craig Brownlee at Castle Avenue.
Photographer: James Meehan

Garryowen edge 'Tarf

Garryowen.....16
Clontarf.....14

THIS was rousing stuff at Castle Avenue. Not the most sophisticated exhibition of rugby skills but the intensity was huge and it ended in a welter of excitement with Clontarf camped on the Garryowen line in a vain bid to grab something. They might have managed a share of the points after a late try but Richard Murphy, their talented out-half, failed with a difficult conversion of substitute prop Rob Benson's score.

Garryowen dominated the first half as half-backs Steve McIvor and Barry Everitt and centre Killian Keane moved the ball. They led 16-9 at half time, with Keane kicking two penalty goals and left wing Conor Kilroy crossing for a try. Just on half time, hooker Pat Humphries added a second. Clontarf's first half points came from three penalties by Richard Murphy, who had three successful place kicks.

However, Garryowen failed to score in a torrid and utterly committed second half, during which visitors' prop Gavin Walsh was sent off after two yellow cards from referee David Napier. Until the closing minutes, Garryowen's defence was impressively sound and they were still holding onto their 16-9 lead.

In those last dramatic moments, Clontarf forced a series of scrums on the Garryowen line but something always seemed to go wrong, with dropped passes, wrong options and solid defence keeping them out until Benson took the pass for a try. But Richard Murphy failed with the difficult conversion and Garryowen survived. **Garryowen:** D Crotty, J Clarke, K Keane, J Brooks, C Kilroy, B Everitt, S McIvor, P Spain (K Ronan 64), P Humphries, G Walsh (P Cunningham), S Leahy, B Humphreys, P Hogan, A Bermingham, D Wallace.
Clontarf: M Woods, N Noble, M Barry, M Smith, M Fitzsimons, R Murphy, A O'Reilly, T Harrigan (R Benson 70), B Jackson, P McQuillan, M Coughlan, C Power (M Meredith 63), A Dignam, P Ward, C Brownlie.
Referee: D Napier (Ulster)

Old Crescent.....24
Dolphin.....6

OLD Crescent made a slow start at Rosbrien but came back in style to decisively beat Dolphin and give themselves a chance of avoiding relegation. Out-half John O'Mahony kicked Dolphin ahead with penalties in the third and 14th minutes.

Gradually, Crescent got their act together and the whole game changed in the 29th minute, when Old Crescent flanker Paul Neville went in for a try which Begley converted. The second Crescent try came through out-half Ken Barrett in the 35th minute and again Begley converted to put his side 14-6 ahead.

Dolphin hardly raised a gallop in an often tedious and predictable second half and Crescent strolled home with a quick penalty by Begley, who then went on to add the points to a third try by Diarmuid O'Malley.

Old Crescent: B Begley, P McDonagh, L Doyle, A O'Dwyer, F Walsh, K Barrett, C Forde (F Downes), D Davis, PJ McLoughlin, T Stapleton, D O'Malley, D Kirby, P Neville, T Browne, B Toland.
Dolphin: C McCoil, D O'Dowd, B Sheehan (C Mahony), B O'Neill, M O'Donovan, J O'Mahony, K Murphy, P Scott, T Kingston, E Knowles, J Forde, R Power, T O'Connell, D Pomeroy, S Jackson.
Referee: D Courtney (Leinster)

Con bounce back to form

Cork Constitution.....28
Lansdowne.....19

A HIGHLY relieved Cork Con did just about enough to earn a vital two points in this mid-table clash when they held out in a heart-stopping five minutes of injury time against a Lansdowne side who looked but a pale shadow of the team which stopped Shannon in their tracks last week.

Lansdowne looked disorganised in the first half as relentless Con pressure yielded a brace of early penalties for out-half Ronan O'Gara and although Kurt McQuilkin dropped a 15th minute goal, the home side dominated the first half.

The surprise was that they had only one try to show, flanker Gerry Murray taking the advantage of a neat break by O'Gara after 20 minutes to touch down, with O'Gara kicking his third penalty fifteen minutes later.

But in one of Lansdowne's few coherent moves, out-half Richard Coveney set up Marcus Dillon and the winger did the rest, full-back Rory Kearns adding the points to leave it 16-10 at the interval. Boosted by the try, Lansdowne opened the second half more purposefully and two penalties from Kearns levelled affairs ten minutes into the half before Con began to reassert themselves.

O'Gara kicked his fourth penalty and some strong pressure yielded a penalty try which the out-half converted ten minutes from time. With Lansdowne reduced to 14 men after hooker Cormac Egan was sin-binned for deliberate offside, the outcome looked inevitable.

But Egan's return put on the pressure and five minutes of injury time were played inside the Con 22, with the home side desperately hanging out for victory after Kearns kicked a late penalty to leave just seven points between the teams.

Cork Con: D O'Brien, M McLoughlin, N Murray, A Byrne, J Kelly (J Lawlor 55), R O'Gara, B O'Meara, P Soden, F Sheehan, J O'Driscoll (P McCarthy 57), R Newell, K Murphy, J Murray, C Kehelly (D O'Callaghan 38), J Canning.
Lansdowne: R Kearns, M Dillon, S Horgan, K McQuilkin, B Glennon, R Coveney, D O'Mahony, E Bohan, C Egan, A McKeen, A McCullin, W Ahern (A Freeman 65), S Rooney, P Mandell, C McEntee.
Referee: T Redmond (Leinster)

Terenure.....13
Blackrock.....20

BLACKROCK put some light into their season of discontent with a close victory over Terenure at Lakelands. For the moment, their relegation fears are put on hold.

The Terenure forwards had to fight hard for possession, while Derek Hegarty was unable to create the usual threat from the backs. Blackrock took an early lead thanks to two penalties from Owen Cobbe inside ten minutes. Cobbe added a dropped goal, with a Shane Cullen penalty keeping Terenure in touch.

Then Terenure were awarded a penalty try in the 25th minute after a series of scrums on the Blackrock line. Hegarty converted to give Terenure a brief lead but Cobbe's third penalty on the stroke of half time left it 12-10 to Blackrock.

The entrance of Paul Hennebry boosted Terenure's comeback but Blackrock were proving stubborn in defence. Cobbe added another three points

before Aidan Guinan scored the game's only try with a terrific burst from his own half after 70 minutes. Ross O'Connor kicked a penalty for 'Nure but 'Rock were not to be denied.

Terenure: C Clarke, G Dempsey, K Desgascun, R Browne, R O'Connor, S Cullen (P Hennebry 53), D Hegarty (J McNill 65), B O'Doherty-Campbell, J Blaney, P Bruce, R Sheritt, P Holdert, J Kelly, P Walsh (B Kavanagh 59), G Sheehan.
Blackrock: T Keating, P Dunne (N Assal 49), B Carey, D Quinlan, A Guinan, O Cobbe, D Grennell, P Flavin (D Kavanagh 40), S Byrne, P Jordan (R Sheehan 65), L Cullen, H Kos, Capt: J Ryan, T Goldfinch, D Moore.
Referee: R McDowell (Ulster)

Dungannon.....16
Old Belvedere.....12

OLD Belvedere's crisis deepened when they crashed to fellow strugglers Dungannon at Stevenson Park. For Dungannon, Keith Walker's first half try was to prove decisive.

It all went wrong for the Dubliners after out-half Billy Treacy kicked three penalties. Dungannon's first meaningful attack reaped rich rewards in the form of second row Walker's 27th minute score. Although Treacy kicked another penalty, Dungannon led 13-12 at the interval.

However, they managed to score just once. A succession of mistakes and some heroic defence deprived Dungannon of opportunities. Ashley Blair missed two kicks on goal but struck an excellent penalty 13 minutes from the end to secure the points.

Dungannon: A Hood, N Moffett, P Magee, A Clarke, R Carey, A Blair, S Bell, D Millar, M Patton (C Farrell), G Leslie, C Simpson (M Smith), K Walker, A Girvan, J Boyd, J Hastings.
Old Belvedere: P McKenna, S Sexton, M Ridge, S Torrey, R Brown, B Tracey, B Murphy, R Ward, J Mion (D McConnell), T Kearns, M Henderson, K Martin, F O'Beirne, S Dods, S Walsh.
Referee: D Tyndall (Leinster)

St Mary's lay ghost of times past to rest

ST MARY'S 13

YOUNG MUNSTER 7

Gerard Doherty
Templeville Road

FIVE minutes after the final whistle, the St Mary's supporters were already recalling this match as an epic after they had run out winners against Young Munster at Templeville Road yesterday.

The margin of victory was slender but it was enough to lay to rest the ghost of All Ireland League matches past. The championship decider in 1993 between these two teams was edged by Young Munster and it is a loss that St Mary's have struggled to recover from since.

The St Mary's attack in the first half was their usual blend of style and pace, and it yielded three penalties, two of which were scored by Fergal Campion in the 13th and 16th respectively.

Young Munster had no reply — Tuohy missing the

only scorable opportunity they had.

It was a first half, however, that was peppered with mistakes, and a Young Munster error five minutes before the interval gave Denis Hickie a try after Mark Cuddihy had made a break from centre-field. Campion converted.

After the break, as expected, the Young Munster pack reverted to type, driving the St Mary's line and opting to scrum and move rather than kick for the points.

It was a tactic that was to prove fruitful in the short term but perhaps lost them the game in retrospect.

Midway through the second half, from near the St Mary's line, Young Munster claimed a lineout ball, drove to the line and huge prop Des Clohessy bundled over for their first score.

Tuohy obliged with the extra points. Conor McGuinness and Trevor Brennan made a welcome return to top class action after long layoffs but it was Denis Hickie who was the subject of Brian

Ashton's analysis.

The St Mary's winger had moved wings at the request of the Irish coach but he was to have little opportunity to show his speed in the second half as Young Munster had their opponents pinned back in their 22 for almost a complete half hour period.

Most of this action took place five metres from the line directly in front of the posts and everyone was aware of what was at stake. A try this late in the game and a certain conversion would have given Young Munster a one point victory.

St Mary's hung in as ferociously repeated attempts to reach their line were repelled.

■ SARACENS captain Tony Diprose scored tries early and late to ensure his team stayed top of the Premiership with a grinding 15-10 win over Richmond.

England squad number eight Diprose crashed over in the fourth minute and scored the winner with 11 minutes left after Richmond had grabbed a 10-7 interval lead.