Academy give students a lesson

ACADEMY 1st XV travelled to Coleraine on Saturday to take on UUC in their last league game before Christmas. The match kicked off in atrocious conditions.

It was Academy playing into a strong wind and driving rain who immediately began to control and dominate the game.

Forwards and backs were running and linking well and the back row of Whan, Henderson and Saunders were covering acres of ground.

The Academy scrum half Noel Branagh was looking surprisingly sharp, and following a short penalty move, Saunders opened the scoring for the visitors.

The Students began to come back into the match, but were unable to break through a strong defence.

Shortly before half-time the Academy backs worked a neat move allowing right wing Mark Cousins to round his opposite number and score in the corner. Half-time score - 10-0.

DOMINANT

Playing with the wind in the second half Academy were now dominant in all aspects of the game. G. Henderson, the veteran No. 8, scored three second half tries, although suspicions of a knock-on seemed justified for the second of his hat-trick.

Open side flanker Neil Saunders crossed for his second try of the game while Rikki Huddleston and Stephen Sharkey both squeezed over from short range.

Stephen Sharkey kicked four second half conversions to leave the final score 48-0.

With no further league games until the New Year Academy look forward to their annual Boxing Day game against the President's XV.

Result - Academy 1st XV 48, UUC 0.

Academy 1st XV - R. Huddleston, M. Cousins, P. Gamble (captain), P. Mercer, S. Kerr, S. Sharkey, N. Branagh, J. Allen, D. Walsh, C. Whan, P. Terrington, J. Turk, I. Whan, N. Saunders, G. Henderson.

Thirds score six tries in win over Antrim

12/1/95

ACADEMY 3rds travelled to Antrim last Saturday to complete the first half of their league season.

From the kick-off the larger Antrim pack put the visitors under pressure, pushing them off the ball in the rucks and set pieces. However, Academy started to win some ball and soon some lovely interchange between wing forwards Jamison and Hodges led to Johnston diving over on the left wing.

It was Johnston who had a hand in Academy's second try when he chipped over the Antrim defence and they caught the ball and fed it to Andrews on the wing.

It was Academy's other centre Neil McCreary who scored the third try when he took a crash ball 10 yards from the line and left the Antrim defence floundering in his wake to score under the posts which he converted.

A lapse in concentration allowed Antrim to score an unconverted try just before half-time.

Half-time — Antrim 5, Academy 17.

In a continuation of the first half, Academy had an expansive game, their backs running riot , with only stout Antrim defence keeping them out.

The Academy pack were holding firm and from a scrum on the 10 yard line Academy scrum half Terry Knox produced a reverse pass to his uncle, Stuart Knox at outhalf who darted under the posts for a try. McCreary converted.

The next Academy try came from a lineout when Jamison gathered and dived over for an opportunist try. McCreary converted.

The final try of the game came when Alan McKeown, the Academy centre, caught the ball from an Antrim attack and outsprinted the whole of the field, running from the halfway line to score under the posts. McCreary converted.

Final score — Antrim 5, Academy 38.

Early Cup exit for Academy

ACADEMY 1st XV v MALONE 2nd XV
McCREA CUP

LAST Saturday Malone travelled to the Valley Park to play last year's finalists Academy in the McCrea Cup.

Both sides looked very well matched in the pack with Academy looking stronger in the backs. The pitch was heavy and the ball, due to the wet conditions, very greasy thus making running rugby difficult.

Play was very even for the first quarter then the home side went into the lead from a penalty by outhalf Stephen Sharkey.

Academy could have increased their lead when left wing Simon Kerr made some startling runs down the line but only good cover tackling by Malone kept him out.

Then with three minutes of the first half to go, and against the run of play, Malone set up an attack and their right wing went over in the corner for an unconverted try.

Half-time — Academy 3, Malone 5.

In the second half Academy set up attack after attack and after a number of penalties in the Malone half which they ran they eventually were awarded a penalty in front of the posts which Sharkey converted to put them into the lead.

With five minutes to go Malone fought their way into the Academy half and went back into the lead when they were awarded a penalty which they converted.

Academy ran the ball at every occasion after this and in the dying minutes were awarded a penalty in the Malone half.

Sharkey had a pressure kick to put Academy into the next bound but to his, and the team's disappointment the ball missed the left hand post by inches.

Full-time — Academy 6, Malone 8.

Seconds hold on to early lead to take both points

FOLLOWING their annihilation of the High School II earlier in the season, Academy came up against a stronger team than they had anticipated in this Charles Hurst Plate clash at Valley Park.

Playing with the advantage of a strong wind in the first half it was Academy who opened the scoring. Donaghy made a surging run deep into the High School twenty-two, setting up a ruck. The High School came round the wrong side and Callaghan converted the resulting penalty with ease.

The heavy pitch was making hard work for both packs although it was Academy who kept the upper hand with some excellent lineout jumping by captain Charlie Caldwell and John Smith, giving them most of the possession.

The High School back-line were moving the ball quite well but some thumping tackles from centres Lynn and McGimpsey nipped them in the bud.

The only try of the game came shortly before half-time. Caldwell tapped down from the lineout, Gilliland tidied and took off like a whippet down the blind side, finally running out of puff five metres out.

The ball went to ground and the High School forwards piled over the top. Quick thinking hooker Marcus McCrory took a quick tap and dived over the line. Callaghan converted another penalty right on half-time, leaving the score 0-11.

The second half saw the High School taking advantage of the strong wind with some deep kicks testing the Academy full back, Alan Gaskin.

The only reward for their pressure was two converted penalties out of a possible four, letting Academy off the hook. Academy's flying winger Trevor Geary had the best chance of the second half but with neither team being very inventive the scoreline finished in Academy's favour.

Result — BHSFP II 6, Academy II 11.

Team: Charlie Caldwell (capt), Gareth Donaghy, Marcus McCrory, Colin Whan, Gareth Gilliland, John Smith, Alan McKenna, Michael McRoberts, Michael Callaghan, Mervyn Lynn, Peter McGimpsey, Trevor Geary, Steven Barr, Alan Gaskin, Colin Thompson.

Academy pack set up victory

RIGHT from the onset of this match last Saturday. The Academy pack dominated their opposite eight.

In dire condition they allowed their backs a freedom seldom seen at this standard of rugby with with the front row of McKay, Olding and Hamilton supplying service second to none.

The first try came from a quick ball which was spun along the backs, McGimpsey passed to Andrew and than looped round to take the ball and crash over for a fine score.

Academy's next try came from a well caught lineout ball which was again quickly spun along the backs to allow left wing Johnston in for an easy try.

This was followed by a try by Stuart Knox the Academy scrum half who picked the ball up from the base of the scrum and left the Donaghadee defence floundering as he dived over the line between the posts.

Five minutes later it was an action replay when Knox picked up and scored -both tries were converted by second row Patton.

Half time - Academy 24, Donaghadee 0.

the second half started with sustained pressure from the visitors however Academy weathered the flurry of activity and then in a scintillating run from his own 22 full-back Gault Caldwell scythed his way through the Donaghadee backs and then fed Andrew for a fine try converted by Patton.

With the wind at their backs Donaghadee continued to push Academy back into their 22 and just when they looked like scoring Academy took control via captain Cromie who drove up the park linking with Hodges who slipped the ball to Johnston who eluded several tackles and went over for his second try - Patton converted

Result - Academy 3rd XV 38, Donaghadee 3rd XV 0.

Academy maintain form at Antrim

ACADEMY 1st XV travelled to Allen Park, Antrim on Saturday to take on the previously unbeaten home team.

Straight from the kick off the Academy pack began to dominate their opposite numbers and from a short line out after just five minutes the Academy hooker, Dominic Walsh crashed over for the opening try.

Although the Antrim pack were under extreme pressure, their backs kept them in the game by scoring two excellent opportunist tries.

It was Academy who finished the first half the strongest, and after some fine inter-passing between forwards and backs Academy No 8 Gordon Henderson squeezed over for a great try just before half time.

Stephen Sharkey converted to leave the sides level 12-12 at half time.

shortly after the restart, Antrim were reduced to 14 men when their prop forward retired injured.

The Academy pack once again began to dominate, but despite repeated attacks the Antrim line remained intact.

An Academy penalty by Stephen Sharkey extend the lead to 15-12 and shortly afterwards Academy effectively closed out the match with a fine try from Simon Kerr.

This was an important win for Academy - leaving the Junior three league wide open as Christmas approaches.

Result - Antrim 1st XV 12, Academy 1st XV 20.

Academy Rugby Football Club before their match with Londonderry. 03527