

Hat-trick of wins edges Academy 1st XV towards play-off

ACADEMY Rugby Club 1st XV completed a busy week with three handsome Qualifying Three League victories.

The first match was against Grosvenor 1st XV, and Academy ran out winners 31-8. Peter McGimpsey, Rikki Huddleston, Neil McCreery and Stephen Sharkie all scored tries. McCreery kicked three penalties and one conversion.

A few days later Academy took on Antrim 1st XV at Valley Park. With Stephen Sharkie not available and captain Paul Gamble sidelined through injury, The Academy backline was re-shuffled to include Alan Gaskin and Fawcett Wilson.

The final scoreline of 11-6 was a relief to the Academy players and spectators. Peter McGimpsey scored the games only try with a fine individual run to score in the corner. Neil McCreery kicked two penalties.

A gruelling week was rounded off with a fine 32-0 victory over Civil Service at Valley Park on Saturday.

It was sweet revenge for Academy who had suffered a reverse at the hands of the same team in their first league game of the season in early September.

It was a different story this time around as Academy went on the rampage scoring tries through Gordon Henderson (2), Donal Walsh, Jonathan Allen and Stephen Sharkie. Sharkie added one penalty and a conversion while McCreery added the final conversion.

Academy complete their league programme against UUC this week and victory would bring them a play-off against Ballymoney for the Qualifying Three title.

Thirds finish season with a victory

ACADEMY 3rd XV finished a fine season with a convincing win over Ballymoney. The game was nearly cancelled due to the non-arrival of the union referee, however a suitable non-partisan referee volunteered from the crowd.

After an evenly contested first ten minutes a break from the base of the scrum gave Mark Patton Academy's first try, unfortunately he narrowly missed the conversion.

Some five minutes later a 'miss' move in the backs sent Scott McGimpsey over for a fine try, Patton converted.

Incessant pressure on the Ballymoney line forced the visitors to concede a penalty, and Academy executed their famous 'Curly B' running penalty sending Terry Knox over a try under the posts, he converted his own try.

The final try of the first half came from set piece play when another 'miss move' gave Bill Andrew the opportunity to take the ball on the 22 and score under the posts.

The second half started with a revitalised Ballymoney team causing Academy some early difficulties.

However, Academy slowly regained the advantage and after a series of scrums in the Ballymoney 22 Knox took the ball from the base and created an opportunist try which Patton converted.

In the last few minutes of the game another set piece play produced what could be described as the try of the season, a dummy switch moved the ball out to the wing for Johnston to stroll under the post and Patton added the points.

Result - Academy 3rd XV 40, Ballymoney 0.

This final score reflected a successful season for Academy 3rd XV, with youth and experience once again blended to produce a good result.

The Thirds finished second in the league an indictment to the dedication and commitment to the club that their captain Ray Cromie has shown.