

## **Lisburn – 5, Enniskillen – 10**

Enniskillen recorded a very hard fought victory on the road against a very committed and dangerous Lisburn side to remain in pole position.

As expected Lisburn started with a flurry and aided by a suspiciously looking touchline decision made inroads down the right wing where only some excellent defence forced play into touch very close to 'Skins line.

Having survived the early scare 'Skins started to get into their stride with some some good passages of play when they endeavoured to keep the ball alive through some neat offloading and quick re-cycling and keeping the hosts guessing by mixing up the plays. Lisburn defended well but eventually the pressure told as 'Skins showed patience building the phases close to the Lisburn line and Robbie Murray sneaked over from a ruck to score his first try.

'Skins had chances to add to their five point lead but despite forced turnovers couldn't capitalise, even missing a penalty on the half hour mark, and shortly after were made to pay. Lisburn managed to put some phases together in 'Skins half for the first time, and from a dubious knock-on decision, when it was clear the Lisburn had dropped the ball first, they created an overlap to score in the corner, levelling the scores.

'Skins didn't let this set back deter them and Lisburn were having to work very hard and maintain their defensive discipline to stop some 'Skins flowing rugby. One worrying feature for the visitors was the scrum which Lisburn increasingly dominated as the game went on, and only a knock one saved 'Skins with open space beckoning on the half-time whistle.

From the second half restart 'Skins used the maul effectively to drive into the hosts' "22", when the second phase was scrappy as Lisburn regrouped to hold up the charge. This was a common theme in the early exchanges with 'Skins sometimes looking unsure what to do next after some good initial surges.

'Skins soon regained the lead and it came from a missed penalty. James McIntyre's effort dropped under the bar, but in Lisburn's attempt to run the ball clear a loose pass was intercepted by the outhalf who raced over the line for the try, which he was unable to convert to put 'Skins 10 – 5 ahead.

Lisburn came in search of the reply, but 'Skins defence was secure. The home side's superiority in the scrum was worrying and gave them a secure platform from which to launch wave after wave of attacks. 'Skins defence was at times desperate, conceding a number of penalties, but these were some way from their own line and Lisburn were unable to capitalise on the possession as 'Skins defence smothered each attack, forcing turnovers, including a scrum take against the head!

Minds go back a season or two when this was a game that 'Skins may have capitulated and lost, but a real sense of team spirit, grit and determination saw them through. 'Skins have a week's break now before a local derby at Omagh. A lot of work will be needed in the interim period, especially at the set piece, but this victory in a hard physical game should stand the team in good stead for the coming months.

Team: M Leitch, R Murray, F Quigley, H Brien, D Taylor, D Buchanan, E Roofe, G Parke, R Connor, J McIntyre, A Duncan, A Wilkinson, A Dixon, M Law, N Johnston.