

Enniskillen – 16, Ballyclare – 7

Enniskillen took this game by the scruff of its neck early on despite a freshening breeze, which probably favoured the visitors in the opening half, and took an early lead through the boot of James McIntyre inside the first five minutes after some early pressure on the Ballyclare line.

'Skins were showing some great enterprise, running the ball freely and forcing the visitors' defence to be strong. David Taylor was getting through a lot of work on his call up to 1st XV action and made a super break after twenty minutes, but despite excellent support work from the rest of the pack the ball was eventually turned over close to the Ballyclare line.

The first try wasn't far off however and after some ill-discipline from the visitors 'Skins pushed them into the corner, from where the forwards drove over the line. Without waiting to see whether the referee could see if the ball was grounded or not it was presented at the back foot where Felix Quigley scooped it up and dived over just to make sure of the five points. Just reward for the big man who had a magnificent match in all facets of the game, he popped up regularly in the loose making some strong carries and showing some deft handling skills, offloading a la Sonny Bill Williams! McIntyre's kick was straight but held up in the strengthening breeze and dropped short, but 'Skins held an eight-point advantage.



Enniskillen then increased their lead just after the half hour mark and it started with a great scything run through the Ballyclare back line by Gavin Parke, playing out of position on the right wing. Whilst the ball was initially lost, big pressure was exerted on the Ballyclare scrum leading to a penalty which McIntyre duly dispatched to make the score 11 – 0.

'Skins were not finished yet and added their second try from the restart, this time another great break was finished off by the fullback injecting pace into the line from some 30 metres, leaving the halftime score at 16 – 0. Despite the wind advantage Ballyclare created little, if any, scoring opportunities with the 'Skins defence sound, a repeat of the efforts of the previous week.

Enniskillen started well enough in the second, continuing from their first half efforts, but even with the wind at their backs the elements were proving difficult to judge, with kicks often being just too long. As a result Ballyclare did enjoy a good percentage of possession, but this was often deep in their own half. It took some time before they could build any momentum and they were aided when an impressive Michael Cadden, stepping into hooker when Kiwi, Robbie Murray, was ruled out during warm-up, was yellow-carded for a high tackle on the visitors' Willie Logan. A touch unlucky as the Ballyclare man was going to ground at the time. Initially 'Skins held out well on their own line forcing turnovers, but eventually the East Antrim men broke their duck and it all started with another superb break from Parke. The ball was however lost again at the breakdown and one of the visiting backs gathered the ball and ran in from what must have been close to halfway. The conversion was successful and the score was now 16 – 7.



'Skins regrouped and probed the fringes with McIntyre finding his range, with his kicks to the corner keeping the visitors again pegged back and the try was arguably the last contribution from the visitors in 'Skins territory. Enniskillen kept the pressure on but were unable to add to their tally and defensively the pressure they exerted caused a lot of fumbles from the visitors. 'Skins were unlucky not to add a third try when the forwards were again adjudged to have been held up over the

line.



Overall a great team display from a side showing six changes from the previous week, playing some attractive rugby. Whilst it was a team display there were a number of undoubted standouts in Quigley, the two additions from the Bangor game, Taylor and Cadden and Eddie Roofe. Quigley and Taylor both contributed some great running and handling, Cadden was devastating in the tackle and at the breakdown, playing as a flanker in the centre of the front row and if there is a blade of

grass on the Mullaghmeen pitch that Roofe didn't cover then it's a rarity! A natural talent. Also worthy of a mention was Johnny Foster, who in his first competitive game at 1st XV level stepped up to the plate and had a solid (in more ways than one) performance.



Within the forwards there is some serious competition for places emerging week on week depending on everyone getting fit, but with the injuries suffered by the backline things do look grimmer with the physios and doctors in the Fermanagh area as important to the team as the coaches at the minute.

'Skins have a break from league action next week as they travel to Belfast for a Junior Cup match against Grosvenor, a side they enjoyed a double over last season. This will be by no means easy, even with a fully fit squad of players and 'Skins will have to be at there best to overcome what was a youthful and pacey side.

