

City of Derry Ladies – 3 Enniskillen Ladies – 41

On Sunday Enniskillen Ladies travelled to Derry for the second time this season for the second pool fixture of the Ulster Cup and with Derry winning 17 - 10 on the last occasion 'Skins knew they must find the intensity they played with in the second half of last week's match against Sligo from the kick off and retain this momentum for the full 80 minutes, and they did not disappoint.

Playing with the strong wind in the first half, 'Skins received the ball from the kick off and worked play down into the Derry "22" with great ball carrying, strong rucking and immense scrummaging from the imposing front row of Aisling Maguire, Clare Brogan and Alice Swan. 'Skins were rewarded for their commanding work when the pack won the ball against the head in a scrum. Number 8 Gemma McCutcheon picked up from the back of the scrum attacking the blind side where she drew in the defence and off-loaded to scrum half Noreen Nethercott, who made no mistake in crossing the line in the corner to put the first points on the board. In windy conditions the conversion drifted wide leaving the score 5 - 0 to 'Skins.

Continuing to keep Derry on the back foot, 'Skins once again worked play back down into the Derry half with great running from both wingers, Shauna McMorrow and Leanne Hall. After a few forward phases, McCutcheon made a break, shrugging off a number of tackles to cross the line for an unconverted try to leave Skin 10 - 0 up.

'Skins continued in the same vein and again with Derry on the back foot a splendid pass from out-half Caoimhe Morris put Brenda Brogan away and she used her pace to leave the Derry defence in tatters and cross the line for try number three.

Derry did test the Enniskillen defence on numerous occasions throughout the half but 'Skins left no gaps with big tackles coming in from Colette "Thomas the Tank Engine" McMorrow and the lively Wendy Rogers.

Unfortunately one of the Derry props was forced to leave the field due to injury and without a front row replacement, scrums were forced to go to seven-man uncontested, which was disappointing for Enniskillen who were dominating the set-piece, however dropping number 8, McCutcheon into the backline saw her run some fearsome lines off out-half Morris.

Some quick thinking from Nethercott on a penalty fifteen metres from the Derry try line saw her tap and go and cut a beautiful line through the Derry defence for the bonus point try. Morris converted to leave the half time score 22 – 0.

With the Enniskillen team having a critical tendency to sit back, and knowing this important game was not won yet, 'Skins carried the pressure into the second half, which they started kicking into the wind. The pressure they carried from the first half kept Derry pinned in their half and from an attacking lineout on the "22", McCutcheon won clean ball, passed off the top to Nethercott who spun the ball out to the oncoming "Thomas" McMorrow who charged to within five metres of the try line with numerous Derry players clinging to her. From the resulting ruck the forwards presented Nethercott with clean ball and with McMorrow having sucked in half of Derry's defence Nethercott spun the ball out to the sterling back line who used simple hands to ship the ball to wing Leanne Hall who crossed the line to score a fantastic team try.

Derry did pressure the Enniskillen defence with some impressive kicking from their scrumhalf and full back which managed to keep 'Skins in their own half. While the 'Skins defensive line held strong with no gaps, a silly penalty allowed Derry to put points on the board with the score now at 27 - 3.

Again from the kick off, 'Skins worked their way back into Derry's "22" where after a number of forward phases the ball was shipped out to the backline and centre Eimear Corrigan sped in for try number six. Morris kicked the conversion to make increase the lead to 34 - 3.

McCutcheon then wrapped up the scoring with another swashbuckling run, taking the ball at full pace from Morris, who converted to leave the score line at a satisfying 41 - 3.

The jubilant coaches Grey and Cathy were satisfied to see their hard work starting to reap rewards. The eccentric masterminds said they were "very pleased with many aspects of the girls' play today. It is excellent to see the hard graft put in on the training pitch reflected in today's performance. While this is a pleasing result, we cannot afford any complacency to creep in and we have two must win games coming up, starting with Cavan next Sunday."

Enniskillen continue their Ulster Cup campaign with a home fixture against Cavan on Sunday, kick off at 1pm and all support is much appreciated.

Enniskillen Ladies are always looking for new recruits, so if you're interested in giving rugby a go, contact Helen on 07842776315 or find us on facebook!