



MATCH REPORT

13 January 2016

Round two of the Danske Bank U16 High Schools' Trophy was played yesterday and Ashfield faced off against Shimna Integrated College.

The game started off with huge disappointment for Ashfield as ill-discipline in the middle of the field caused the Ashfield defence to be sucked in and the narrow spread allowed Shimna's wing to run wide and cross the try-line to score in the corner. After only 5 minutes of play we were down by 5.

Knock-ons and other handling errors are always a common occurrence in rugby and especially at U16 level, so it is important that teams have a solid scrum to account for this. Luckily for Ashfield, our scrum was dominant throughout the match. Jack Livingstone proved his mettle as he hooked the opponent's ball almost every time to overturn the ball in Ashfield's favour.

Much of the first half was spent inside of Shimna's own twenty-two as Ashfield tried valiantly to break down their

defence. Credit must go to Number 8, Dylan Galloway, who showed real aggression and power in his bid for the line, however he soon became the target for a swarm of green shirts and his attempts were ultimately thwarted.

At the half-time whistle we were still 5 points behind and the boys were frustrated that we had nothing to show for our efforts.

In the second-half, Ashfield showed off their composure at the break-down with Glen Brown executing a superb choke-tackle to wrap up opposition twice his size. When the referee called 'Maul!' all that was left was for Ashfield to seal off the ball and the turn-over was good.

Then, disaster - a repeat of the mistakes of the first half allowed Shimna to score and convert a try bringing the scoreboard to a horribly unrepresentative 12 - 0.

With ten minutes left on the clock, Ashfield's behemoth of a scrum allowed number 9

Ryan Hitching, fresh on the pitch, to pick out Joshua Jones in the back line and it went through the hands to Joshua Addis, who crossed the line to finally put Ashfield on the scoreboard. Captain Jones put the ball clean over the bar to convert the try.

Shimna 12 - Ashfield 7.

Sensing Ashfield was in the ascendancy, the Shimna coach called to the ref to check his watch.

4 minutes left.

After the restart, Ashfield found themselves deep in their own half, backs up against the wall, defending against Shimna who were hammering down towards the Ashfield line.

Out of nowhere, Joe Crutchley ripped the ball cleanly from the hands of the assailant and, in the closing minutes of a gruelling match, Crutchley found reserves in the tank that stunned Shimna. He tore up the muddy pitch, beating the opposing winger. He then became ensnared as

a chasing Shimna back grabbed his shirt, but, with a great show of strength, he avoided being pulled in to touch and managed to shake himself free, finally stepping inside to beat a final man who arrived too late and could only watch as Joe triumphantly placed the ball between the uprights.

12 points each. The conversion attempt would be the final action of the game. Mr McFaul grabbed the kicking-tee and handed to Captain Joshua Jones - "No pressure Josh, but this is for the match."

14 spent Ashfield players held what was left of their breath as they watched their captain begin his run up. Joshua struck the ball cleanly and it sailed over the bar.

The ref blew his whistle to end the match.

Final score:

Ashfield 14 Shimna 12