**Kukri Ulster Rugby Champ/Conf Division 2**

**Banbridge 2nd XV v Limavady 1st XV - 7th September 2019**

On a pleasant dry day, perfect for rugby, Banbridge kicked off at Rifle Park with a moderate breeze on their back.

Limavady started the stronger and took the lead on 8 minutes when James McBriar went under the posts after a collecting a clever kick over the Banbridge defence by Luke Faulkner who then added the conversion to give Limavady a 7-0 lead. Banbridge came back strongly but failed to put points on the board when their No 9, Aran Kennedy, missed a penalty kick. He made amends two minutes later when he was successful with his second kick making the score 3-7. On 20 minutes Limavady scored again, after a period of sustained pressure, when Micheal Rice crossed the line under the posts. Luke Faulkner added the conversion to give Limavady a 14 – 3 lead. Limavady then had a purple patch playing strong, accurate flowing rugby, which brought its reward when Luke Faulkner scored a try wide on the right with men to spare after the ball was passed through several hands. This time he missed the conversion leaving Limavady 19 – 3 up. The game became untidy for a period with multiple handing errors and infringements by both teams. Banbridge were next to score when their right-wing Jamie Mullan went over in the right corner on 27 minutes. The conversion was missed. Banbridge made good progress into the Limavady 22 and were awarded a penalty for offside, which was converted by Aran Kennedy. At half time Limavady had a19-11 lead.

Early in the second half the Limavady No 6 Dylan Purdy was sin binned for an infringement at the ruck. Banbridge were unable to make use of the man advantage with some dogged defence from Limavady including getting a scrum penalty in front of their own posts. From the resulting line out Limavady made rapid progress up the field resulting in a 5-meter scrum under the Banbridge posts. Limavady No 8 Jody McMurray picked up and went right strongly and fed Stuart Morrow who crossed the whitewash for another 5 points. The conversion was missed. Limavady now had 24-11 lead and a try bonus point in the bag.

The match now entered a frenetic phase. Banbridge were awarded multiple scrum penalties under the Limavady posts with the referee eventually losing his patience and “carding” Limavady prop Clive Scott. The inevitable happened when the Banbridge No 8, Rubeen McCreary, dotted down under the Posts. With the score now 24-18 to Limavady it was anyone’s game. From a scum on the Banbridge 22 Limavady breeched the Banbridge defence for Stuart Morrow to score his second try of the day. The conversion was missed but Limavady now had a cushion with the score now 29 - 18. From the kick off Banbridge regained possession with a great take, which led to several phases of play and a Banbridge try which was converted. Limavady had to defend strongly, in a tense finish, to win the match 29-25.

This was another hard earned 5-point win on the road against a talented senior Club 2XV team who pushed the Roesiders all the way to the final whistle. With 11 players unavailable for selection due to injuries, work or holidays the coach Graeme Eastwood gave starts to Willie McCollum and Dylan Purdy in the pack and Jack Elliott, Jim McCartney & James McBriar in the backline.