

Highfield stay on track for promotion

AIL RUGBY

■ Sean McCarthy

Old Belvedere 12
Highfield 17

HIGHFIELD stayed on course for promotion to Division 1A after they beat Old Belvedere at Ollie Campbell Park on Saturday.

Tim Ryan's side have a nine point lead at the top of the table, and with just four games left, look unlikely to be overtaken by Old Wesley.

The Dublin outfit deserve credit for the way they went about their business and deserved a bonus point for their efforts having played most of the game with 14 men after they had a player red carded early for throwing a punch.

Ryan's side have shown a winning mentality all season and it they certainly needed it against good opposition and in such awful conditions.

The game mightn't have been the prettiest from Highfield's perspective with the huge crossfield wind dictating it.

The Model Farm Road outfit still managed to score three tries with Colin O'Neill and Kevin Slater crossing while the pack claimed a penalty try as well after putting huge pressure on the home pack.

Colin O'Neill got Highfield off to a great start with a try which was unconverted for a 5-0 head start.

They extended that lead with the penalty try and had a man extra for the final 50 minutes of the game after Belvo had their man sent. That score left it at 12-0 and in the testing conditions that was a big lead.

Belvedere deserve great credit though. They got in for their first score of the game six minutes before half time to give them a fighting chance and the score remained 12-5 at the interval.

Just as they have been showing a winning mentality all season, they also have showed a willingness to run the ball and their third try was the pick of the bunch as Kevin Slater finished off that was started at half way and sold a dummy before touching down to give the Cork team a 17-5 lead on the 50 minute mark.

To their credit, Belvedere refused to lie down and came back with a try of their own through Peter McCague. Tommy Whittle managed to land the penalty to give the Dubliners a sniff of a chance but Highfield's defence for the remainder of the game remained intact.

Coach Ryan and assistant Conor Quaid will be delighted to get a couple of weeks off for their players to help with any knocks and bumps after such a physical encounter.

Highfield are at home on St Patrick's weekend with a clash against St Mary's.

Scorers Old Belvedere: Tries: R McMahon, P McCague; Con: T Whittle Highfield: Tries: C O'Neill, pen try, Kevin Slater; plus pen con.

Well remain in a relegation battle

AIL RUGBY

■ Eolan Allen

Sunday's Well 21
Enniscorthy 36

SATURDAY was a frustrating afternoon for Sunday's Well, as an inability to exert any control either side of half-time effectively saw them lose out to Enniscorthy in an entertaining contest.

They at least managed to secure a losing bonus-point through a Michael Moynihan try, but couldn't push on for a win. The result leaves them in the thick of a very congested relegation battle in Division 2C of the Energia All Ireland League.

As with everywhere else in the country; there was a very cold blustery gale at Musgrave Park; although it remained dry throughout.

The Well had the advantages of the wind in the first half and applied pressure immediately. Having established territorial advantage, their forwards carried strongly with Jonathon Gardiner making some particularly powerful carries.

Eventually, Cormac Kelliher managed to round the defence and touch-down with Brian Derham making a superb touchline conversion.

Enniscorthy though were always dangerous with open-field runners and found several holes through the 'Well defence.

The hosts' scramble defence was strong throughout but they did eventually concede after Timmy Morrissey carried off a scrum mid-way through the half.

The Well responded immediately mid-way; with Conor O'Brien; who had an inspirational performance throughout; blocked a kick and gathered the ball to race forty metres to score under the posts with Derham converting.

The Well struggled to set a platform after this and were also getting frustrated with a series of tight officiating decisions going against them. They ended the half defending their own line but held on to their 14-5 lead.

They invited pressure as they knocked on from the kick-off in the second half.

The Well defended formidably but conceded several penalties with Ian Murphy eventually being yellow-



Bryan Derham has an easy kick to convert the try by Cyprian Jouve who scored beneath the posts.

Picture: Larry Cummins



Scrum-half Peter Arigho in action for Sunday's Well against Enniscorthy at Musgrave Park.

Picture: Larry Cummins

carded. The pressure eventually told with Ivan Jacob scoring two tries in as many minutes; while Ben Kidd converted both.

The Well were still on the back-foot and an excellent break by winger Billy Wickham set up Dave Murphy for the

Wexford side's bonus-point try.

With the game seeming to be beyond them; the Well regrouped. Conor O'Brien inspired the fight-back with some big surges in defence and being a constant thorn on Enniscorthy's line-out.

The Well also started to earn a series of penalties with Enniscorthy getting two yellow cards.

They found gaps around the fringes with powerful forward runners and it was Michael Moynihan who made the crucial burst to touch-down. Derham's converted left five points in it with ten minutes remaining.

The Well couldn't regain to win the game and the frustration culminated in Cyprian Jouve receiving a red card at the end of the game.

Scorers for Sunday's Well: C Kelliher, C O'Brien, M Moynihan tries; B Derham 3 cons.

Enniscorthy: T Morrissey, I Jacob (2), D Murphy tries; B Kidd 3 cons.

SUNDAY'S WELL: B Derham; J Kiernan, E Geary (c), R Buckley, R O'Keefe; B Pope, P Arigho; I Murphy, J Barry, E O'Connell; J Barnes, J Gardiner; C O'Brien, C Jouve, C Kelliher.

Subs: D Lacey, S Desmond, M Moynihan, G O'Sullivan, J Barrett.

ENNISCORTHY: R Dunne; I Jacob, H O'Neill, I Poole, B Wickham; B Kidd, A Dunne; A Todisco, D Murphy, J Waters; L Stamp, T Stamp; N Doyle, B Bolger, T Morrissey.

Subs: R Cahill, J Doyle, S Hadley, T Ryan, N Parker. **Referee:** P O'Connor (IRFU).

Revenge for Cork Con as Highfield out of Junior Cup

AIL RUGBY

■ Olan Allen

HOLDERS Highfield were knocked out of the Bank of Ireland Munster Junior Cup as only half of the fourth round ties went ahead last weekend.

At Woodleigh Park, Cork Constitution got sweet revenge for last year's final defeat by Highfield in the Bank of Ireland Junior Cup with a 16-14 victory over the holders. A Darragh McNamara penalty gave Con a 3-0 half-time lead. Twelve minutes into the second half, Con led 13-0 with tries from Vince O'Brien and Barry Galvin.

Sean Garrett brought Highfield back into contention with a try which Paddy O'Toole converted. McNamara kicked a penalty for the visitors a minute from time, and an injury-time try and conversion by O'Toole could not halt Highfield's exit.

Bandon got the better of Clonakilty in the west Cork derby with a 24-17 win. Gearoid O'Leary and Olan Crowley scored tries for Bandon and Ben Ridgeway kicked four penalties and a conversion.

Darragh O'Connor, Ruslan Dorogan, and Rob Finglas replied with ties for Clonakilty and Eoghan Deasy added a conversion.

Abbeyleafe defeated Charleville 13-6 thanks to an injury-time try by Jack Quirke, which Derry O'Connor converted. Jesse Smith gave Charleville a 6-0 interval lead, but two penalties from O'Connor levelled early in the second half. With extra time beckoning, the visitors struck with the all-important score.

Both Ballincollig v Galbally and Kinsale v Garryowen were postponed, while Mallow v Kilfeacle and Newcastle West v Crosshaven were cancelled.

Four penalties from Danny Hutchinson were not enough for Bantry Bay, who lost at home to Dungarvan in the Munster Junior Plate quarter-final, 16-12.

Cobh Pirates reached the final of the Munster Junior Bowl with a 20-5 home win over Youghal. Ian Jones scored three tries for Cobh and Rory Geary got one. Killian Daly replied with a try for Youghal.

Cobh will face Clonmel in the decider as two late tries from Kealan McDonald earned the Tipperary side a 22-18 home win against Killarney.

Skibbereen enjoyed a 22-7 bonus point home win against Clanwilliam in Division 1 of the Munster Junior League. Lorcan Carey, Daniel Duggan, Matthew Bushe, and Kevin Coombes scored tries for Skibbereen and Bushe added one conversion.

Waterpark defeated St. Senan's 26-3 to remain four points clear of Skibb, but the West Cork side have a game in hand away to Bandon next week. St. Senan's are now relegated from the top flight.

Muskerry top Division 2 after their 55-0 away win at Fermoy and Old Christians' 78-7 win in Tralee sees them go second, a point behind Muskerry.