

Match Report - Sunday, 7th February 2010

London Irish (Lions) v Rosslyn Park – under 15

It was a dull, grey, cold morning at Sunbury as the London Irish Lions (under 15s) prepared for their fifth league match of the season in the Surrey League Division One. Following four victories in their first four league matches the London Irish team now faced a home match against Rosslyn Park. The pitch was still very soft and muddy following the recent bad weather. The match was scheduled for an 11.00am kick off.

Rosslyn Park kicked off and went straight on to the attack impressively passing the ball around. Within a couple of minutes Rosslyn Park broke away on the right to run through and score a very good try. The try was not converted.

London Irish 0 – 5 Rosslyn Park

London Irish responded immediately and went straight on to the attack. Rosslyn Park were defending well but were under pressure and gave away a penalty. There followed a great drive by the London Irish forwards which threatened the Rosslyn Park line. The ball was quickly passed across the pitch and eventually reached **Jobi Burke** who broke clear on the left to sprint away from the chasing defenders and score in the corner. The try was not converted.

London Irish 5 – 5 Rosslyn Park

Play now centred around the halfway line as both teams battled for possession. The ball was won by the London Irish backs and after a great forward run the ball was passed inside for another fast powerful run through the centre of the Rosslyn Park defence. The ball was passed to **Craig Banyon-Thomas** who evaded a number of tackles to run past a number of defenders and score under the posts. **Robert Lynch** converted the try.

London Irish 12 – 5 Rosslyn Park

After the restart Rosslyn Park continued to pass the ball around well as they attempted to move forward but London Irish countered well and play again centred around the halfway line. London Irish were now getting into their stride. The London Irish forwards were dominating and the backs were playing some excellent passing rugby. Rosslyn Park were also passing the ball around well and attempting to take advantage of the speed of their backs. A great drive by the London Irish forwards followed by an excellent passing move led to the ball being received by **Alex Abbot-Tavener**. Alex started on a fast powerful run down the left side before running around to score a great try under the posts. **Robert Lynch** again converted the try.

London Irish 19 – 5 Rosslyn Park

London Irish were now in the ascendancy and continued to attack. The London Irish forwards were proving much too strong for their counterparts and their forward drives were now threatening the Rosslyn Park line in the right corner. Rosslyn Park cleared the ball to their right side and as a Rosslyn Park player ran forward he was tackled by a London Irish back just as he kicked the ball forward. The tackle was a fraction late and the London Irish player received a yellow card. This was a close decision as the London Irish player appeared committed to the tackle while the Rosslyn Park player still had the ball but, nevertheless, he had to leave the field for ten minutes. From the resulting penalty Rosslyn Park kicked for goal but missed. Almost immediately London Irish went straight back on to the attack and nearly broke through to score again but good tackling by the Rosslyn Park defence prevented another score. The half time whistle blew.

Half Time: London Irish 19 – 5 Rosslyn Park

London Irish kicked off for the second half and went straight on to the attack. Another great drive by the London Irish forwards took the maul over the Rosslyn Park try line. From the resulting scrum on the 5m line the ball was again won and then, with great vision, kicked across to the right corner. The ball was brilliantly caught and passed back to **Andy Ski** who ran over to score a tremendous try near the corner. The try was not converted.

London Irish 24 – 5 Rosslyn Park

London Irish were now gaining full control of the match as play again moved back to the Rosslyn Park '22'. However Rosslyn Park continued to defend well and cleared the ball only for London Irish to pile more pressure on their defence after yet another excellent forward drive. At this point the London Irish player 'yellow carded' in the first half returned to the match and London Irish were back to full strength. Almost immediately a great run took the ball almost to the Rosslyn Park try line but a last ditch tackle prevented another London Irish try. From the resulting scrum on the 5m line more London Irish pressure resulted in a line out. From this the ball was won and passed to **Jordan Harris** who, with great strength and determination, drove over to score near the posts. **Robert Lynch** again converted the try.

London Irish 31 – 5 Rosslyn Park

London Irish were now in complete control of the match. The forwards were dominating and proving much too strong for their opponents. Similarly the London Irish backs were putting together excellent passing moves that were a joy to watch. The team as a whole was performing to an exceptionally high standard and this included some great individual play. Rosslyn Park, however, continued to fight back but as the ball was played into the London Irish '22' a Rosslyn Park player was given a yellow card for an off the ball incident after a London Irish back had cleared the ball. From the resulting penalty London Irish again resumed on the attack and nearly broke through the Rosslyn Park defence again. After another scrum was again won by London Irish the ball was passed to **Alex Abbot Tavener**

who powerfully sprinted through the centre of the Rosslyn Park defence to score a great try under the posts. **Robert Lynch** again converted the try.

London Irish 38 – 5 Rosslyn Park

London Irish were now completely dominating and producing some excellent running and passing rugby as more tries seemed inevitable. London Irish continued to apply heavy pressure as **Jordan Harris** received the ball and powerfully ran through to score a very good try near the posts. **Robert Lynch** again converted the try.

London Irish 45 – 5 Rosslyn Park

The match was now effectively over as London Irish had a 40 point lead.

Shortly after the restart London Irish scored a try that seemed to epitomise their overall performance. The ball was won in the London Irish '22' and a tremendous forward run by a London Irish forward was followed immediately, after a good ruck, by another excellent powerful forward run by another London Irish forward. The ball was offloaded very well and after a couple of excellent quick passes the ball reached **Jobi Burke** on the left wing who sprinted past the remaining defenders to score in the left corner. The move that led to this try covered most of the length of the pitch and demonstrated power, determination, speed and accuracy of passing. It brought gasps of appreciation from some spectators. The try was not converted.

London Irish 50 – 5 Rosslyn Park

Rosslyn Park, to their immense credit, continued to fight back and went on the attack from the restart. The final whistle blew shortly afterwards.

Full Time: London Irish 50 – 5 Rosslyn Park

This was another great win for the London Irish (under 15) Lions who also collected another bonus point for the number of tries scored. The team have now won all of their first five league matches and remain on top of the Surrey League Division One.

This was a great team performance on a heavy pitch. Many spectators left commenting on the very high standard of the rugby and saying that it was a joy to watch. At the end of the match the London Irish coaches commented on the maturity of the performance by the London Irish team. This was a match when both the forwards and the backs were excellent. The strength and dominance of the forwards were supplemented by the excellent quick passing movements, running and tackling of the backs. Many of the tries scored were the result of some exceptionally good play of the highest standard. The London Irish players again demonstrated a real fighting spirit, great teamwork and a determination to win.

Credit must be given to Rosslyn Park who had some very good individual players and who also played some good passing rugby. They didn't give up and attempted to attack right up

to the final whistle. This victory by London Irish was very well deserved and the whole squad of players deserve real credit.