

## **Cobham v London Irish (Lions) – under 15**

It was a cold morning in Cobham as the London Irish Lions (under 15s) prepared for their third league match of the season in the Surrey League Division One. Following their very convincing win against Richmond in their last league match, London Irish now faced another vital match against one of their rivals. This match had been rearranged following the postponement of the original fixture due to heavy rain. This match was a 12.30 kick off and the pitch was soft following more heavy rainfall.

From the kick off London Irish went on to the attack but unfortunately, in the first few minutes, Craig Banyon-Thomas had to go off with an ankle injury. London Irish continued to attack and, shortly afterwards, were awarded a penalty. **Robert Lynch** took the kick and scored to put London Irish into a deserved lead.

### **Cobham 0 – 3 London Irish**

London Irish continued to attack and threaten the Cobham try line, nearly breaking through the Cobham defence on a number of occasions. There were a number of penetrating runs by the London Irish forwards and the backs were putting together good passing movements that the Cobham defence had difficulty coping with. After some excellent play and terrific teamwork by London Irish, **Robert Lynch** collected the ball and made a brilliant run through the centre sending the Cobham defence the wrong way with two dummies before scoring a great try under the posts. **James Stanhope** converted the try.

### **Cobham 0 – 10 London Irish**

From the restart London Irish resumed control of the match and could have been further ahead but started to concede a few penalties. From one of these penalties Cobham kicked for goal but the kick went wide. Shortly afterwards a London Irish player received a yellow card for a high tackle and had to leave the pitch for ten minutes. This proved to be something of a turning point in the match as Cobham attempted to take full advantage of London Irish being reduced to 14 players. Cobham piled on the pressure and threatened the London Irish try line but were met with a very solid defence and some terrific tackling. At this point the referee's decisions were not going London Irish's way as they were repeatedly penalised. As the match approached half time London Irish broke on the right and Kane Alboni ran clear and was about to score when the referee blew his whistle for a forward pass. This decision seemed very harsh to spectators who were in line with the play.

### **Half Time: Cobham 0 – 10 London Irish**

Cobham resumed on the attack at the start of the second half against the 14 players of London Irish. Eventually the London Irish player who had received a yellow card was allowed

back on. The match was now a tough physical battle with the London Irish players rising to the occasion. In particular, every one of the London Irish forwards was working very hard and the backs were tackling well as the team went on the attack. London Irish, now back to full strength, continued to pressurise the Cobham defence but frequently the attacks were broken up as the referee awarded penalty after penalty against them and the match became very disjointed. London Irish continued to apply pressure and most of the game was played in the Cobham half. However, Cobham continued to fight back and eventually a poor London Irish pass was telegraphed and intercepted by a Cobham player who ran clear to score against the run of play. The try was converted.

#### **Cobham 7 – 10 London Irish**

Cobham now scented a comeback but London Irish responded well and went straight back on to the attack. Following a great passing move **Jordan Harris** collected the ball and demonstrated great strength by driving past a number of tackles to go over and score near the posts. **James Stanhope** converted the try.

#### **Cobham 7 – 17 London Irish**

The match continued with more penalties being awarded against London Irish while a number of Cobham infringements appeared to be missed by the referee. With only a few minutes left, and immediately after a clear offside against Cobham was not penalised, an attempted clearance by a London Irish back was charged down as the Cobham player ran through to score. The try was converted.

#### **Cobham 14 – 17 London Irish**

The score-line did not now reflect the balance of play, most of which had been in the Cobham half, but London Irish responded by going straight back on to the attack. Cobham tried to reply as they sensed an opportunity to win the game but London Irish players continued to play determined rugby and demonstrate excellent teamwork. After more pressure by London Irish, with the match a very long way into added time, **Robert Lynch** collected the ball and split the Cobham defence with a brilliant body swerve as he ran through to score. The try was not converted. The final whistle blew immediately.

#### **Full-Time: Cobham 14 – 22 London Irish**

This was a great win for London Irish who now have won all of their first three league matches and remain on top of the Surrey League Division One. After dominating the early part of the match the players responded exceptionally well when, after going down to fourteen players, they faced a strong response from Cobham. The forwards, in particular, rose to the occasion and fought throughout the whole match with real tenacity. Also there were some great moments of creativity from the backs. Overall this was a great team

performance and the players demonstrated a real fighting spirit, great teamwork and a determination to win. This was a hard earned, but very well deserved win by London Irish.