

Richmond v London Irish (Lions) – under 15

It was a lovely sunny morning in Richmond as the London Irish Lions (under 15s) prepared for their second league match of the season. The weather was in stark contrast to the storms of the previous couple of days and the pitch was very wet and heavy following the very heavy rainfall.

This was a vital match for London Irish against their close rivals. Having won the Surrey League Division One title last season, winning every match in the process, London Irish would face a real test against Richmond, who finished third last season. Both teams had won their opening matches, London Irish beating Kings by 67 – 20, and Richmond beating Reeds (who finished second in league last season) by one point.

London Irish kicked off and Richmond went straight on to the attack. Richmond put pressure on the London Irish defence without ever threatening the try line. London Irish responded but, following a fairly even passage of play, they began to give away penalties for going off their feet in the rucks. Eventually Richmond got a chance to take the lead from a penalty by taking a kick for goal. However the kick went wide and the match remained scoreless. Shortly afterwards London Irish were reduced to 14 players when they had a player sin-binned after an off-the-ball clash. This decision was thought by most observers to be harsh, particularly as the Richmond player involved was not treated the same way. London Irish responded by controlling the tempo of the game. Following a great ruck, London Irish won the ball and quickly passed the ball across the pitch from left to right. **Kane Alboni** collected the ball and ran powerfully past the remaining Richmond defenders to score on the right side. The try was not converted.

Richmond 0 – 5 London Irish

This try, while London Irish were reduced to 14 players, set the tone for the rest of the match. From the restart London Irish went straight on to the attack. The London Irish forwards were now dominating their Richmond counterparts and following some strong powerful forward runs at the Richmond defence,

James Stanhope received the ball and scored in the left corner. The try was not converted.

Richmond 0 – 10 London Irish

London Irish were now dominating the match and shortly afterwards **James Willis** collected the ball on the left wing and produced a devastating turn of speed to run past Richmond defenders and score in the left corner. The try was not converted. The half-time whistle blew.

Half Time: Richmond 0 – 15 London Irish

Richmond kicked off the second half and London Irish were soon on the attack and again putting pressure on the Richmond try line. It seemed only a matter of time before London Irish scored another try but Richmond were able to relieve the pressure when London Irish again conceded a penalty and play went back to the half-way line. Richmond gained possession but a tremendous interception by **Jobi Burke** resulted in Jobi sprinting away from the Richmond defenders and running half the length of the pitch to score. This fourth try assured London Irish of the bonus point. Again the try was not converted.

Richmond 0 – 20 London Irish

London Irish were now dominating every part of the field. The Richmond forwards were being outfought and outplayed by the London Irish forwards. Meanwhile the backs were producing some quick passing movements and were threatening to score nearly every time they went forward. Richmond could not cope with the combination of the powerful runs and drives by the London Irish forwards and the speed of the backs. Most of the play was now in the Richmond '22' and London Irish repeatedly threatened the Richmond try line. Shortly after another powerful forward run, the ball was passed to **Robert Lynch** who split the Richmond defence with a brilliant dummy and ran through to score under the posts. **Robert** took the conversion himself and scored.

Richmond 0 – 27 London Irish

The final whistle was blown shortly afterwards.

Full-Time: Richmond 0 – 27 London Irish

This was a great win for London Irish who now have a maximum ten points from their first two games, having gained a bonus point (for scoring four or more tries) in both games.