

Lancashire U20s went in to their Quarter-Final with Buckinghamshire U20s as not only the highest point scoring County in the country after the Group games but also the County with least points conceded. Not bad when other Groups have four teams and play an extra game.

Lancashire had a few selection problems, some players not available others with injuries but a strong looking Squad was selected and eager to take their free scoring form into this must win Knockout game. The marker was placed early as Lancashire broke down the left flank moved ball back inside for a couple of strong carries allowing Scrum Half Jack Dugdale (Wigan) collect at the base of a ruck and squirm over the line for the opening try. Fly-Half Harry Finan (Vale of Lune) landed the conversion and the home side were 7-0 up after just 3 minutes. Five minutes later the powerful Lancashire pack drove for the line which allowed No.8 Hallam Chapman (Sedgley Park & MMU) the chance to touchdown. From the kick off a strong run by Centre Sam Stott (Preston Grasshoppers) saw him break one tackle and draw the last defender before putting Sam Fisher (Fylde) in to space and try number three arrived duly converted by Finan.



“Double Sam Slam” - Sam Stott draws the last man (Left) and Sam Fisher is away to score (Right)

A hurried clearance kick on the quarter hour was returned along the Lancashire backline where once again Stott who ran a lovely line after taking a pass off fellow Centre Will Hunt (Vale of Lune) drew the defenders and created an overlap again on the left flank, never a good thing when you are defending but worse when the ball is passed to Tom Carleton (Fylde – pictured below) saw try number four on the quarter hour.



At 26-0 down you would expect Buckinghamshire to resort to damage limitation however that was not the case as they put themselves on the front foot with some dogged work up front and some direct running in the Backs especially from Centre Elliott Pittwood (Buckingham RFC) who was a handful all day. This purple patch came to a head on 31 minutes when the visitors created an extra man on the left and Full Back Matthew Wells (Loughborough University) dotted down over the whitewash, Flyhalf Callum Millard (Towcestrians) landed the conversion. Lancashire decided then to move up the gears and from the restart a turnover was produced on the left leaving a ruck 30 metres from the Bucks line. A series of drives allowed Dugdale to pop a pass to Loose Head Prop Elliot Horner (Kirkby Lonsdale) who like all good Props set off on a run a full 10 Metres from the line. The old Lancashire saying of “Keep Goin’Wi’Yed Down” was never more apt as several defenders weren’t going to stop the “Lancaster Express” from scoring.



Elliot Horner – try machine!

With just seconds left in the half the Pack rumbled their way to the opposition line and Blindside Flanker James Torkington (Fylde) scored his 5th try in three games. Half-time Lancashire 36 Buckinghamshire 7.

The early exchanges went better for Bucks but after 44 minutes the ball was spilled on halfway Lancashire swarmed forward and Sam Stott spotted a gap and he was over the line before any defenders had time to recover. Fast Forward three minutes later and Stott was over in almost identical fashion with Finan converting both. After 57 minutes the hardworking Hunt was rewarded with a try and Finan landed the last of his successful conversions.

Chapman bulldozed his way thru a clearly tiring defence to grab his second of the match and replacement Hooker Matt Gallagher (Sedgley Park) had too much speed after breaking the line for the defenders to chase. The final score of the day came courtesy of replacement Centre Conor Cosh (Sale FC/MMU) who scored wide to the left of the posts. The final score of 72-7 was probably a bit harsh on the visitors given their efforts in the middle part of the game however with that said Lancashire seem able to attack from anywhere and with anyone and a total of 33 Tries in three games with 2 against tells its own story. Another tough opponent in the shape of Berkshire U20 await in the Semi-finals should be “beltin” as they say in Wigan.