



# LANCASHIRE COUNTY RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION

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RFU U20 National Championship North Group – Pool A

Lancashire U20 43 Staffordshire U20 0

Played at Wigan RUFC

Lancashire U20s continued where they left off with a comprehensive victory over a stubborn Staffordshire U20 side that compete throughout despite the one sided looking score line.

A nervy first 10 minutes saw Lancashire make several unforced errors and Staffordshire had the chance to take the lead with a penalty on 8 minutes after the home side were penalised for killing the ball in the ruck. However the kick faded to the left and Lancashire began to stick some phases together pressure on the Staffordshire defensive line saw a hurried kick in touch and from the lineout Lancashire Skipper Ben Gregory (Fylde) latched on to the ball at the back of the maul and touched down for the opening try. Flyhalf James Robins (Firwood Waterloo) added the extra two points and Lancashire started to take a stranglehold on the game. Just after the half hour a series of powerful scrums resulted in No.8 Hallam Chapman (MMU & Sedgley Park) the chance to pick up from the back of a quickly advancing scrum then breaking a tackle on the line to score an unconverted try.

Half time was reached with no further scores. Lancashire realised that Staffordshire and their very dangerous looking backline were still in the game so a good start was needed in the 2<sup>nd</sup> period.

It took less than 3 minutes for that to happen, the Lancashire pack setup good field position and Scrum Half Andy Hulme (Loughborough Uni / Preston Grasshoppers) sent the ball out to Robins who then popped up a pass for Centre Connor Wilkinson (Fylde) running a great line which allowed him to step the defensive cover and accelerate under the posts, conversion good Lancashire now led 19-0.

Six minutes later Gregory grabbed his second try and Robins knocked over another conversion. Flanker George Blackwell (KGS & Fylde) finished a fine sweeping attack with a try on the left and that was followed by another excellent passage of fast attacking play with Winger James Ratcliffe (Firwood Waterloo) finished with aplomb. With two minutes left on the clock the hard working Hulme over for the final try of the day after some more sublime offloads in the middle of the park. Robins landed the conversion to record a final score of 43-0.

Coach Martin Scott was delighted with the way his charges responded after a lacklustre first half. “We didn’t have to say much to the lads, they knew they weren’t playing to their full potential and to be fair our opponents were one of the reasons why. At half-time the lads decided on what they needed to do and they then went out and did it.”

On the negative side Lancashire picked up two injuries, Lock Matt Garrod (Fylde) popped a shoulder and Scrum Half Ruairidh Swan (Myerscough) suffered a wrist injury. Additional replacement Prop Adam Joyner (Fylde) required stitches in a head wound.

Prior to the game Fly Half Will Hunt (Preston Grasshoppers) had to pull out with a nasty sounding illness that required a hospital visit, the Squad all wished Will a quick recovery.