

Monday 21st March 2022: NEBSSA Shield (held at Cambridge House)

The Ballymena U13 A's completed their season in fine style by winning the NEBSSA Shield which was held at Cambridge House. 8 teams competed across two groups with the top two from each group going through to the semi-finals.

Ballymena started the competition well with a strong win against Antrim Grammar, running in five tries and three good conversions, with no points conceded. In the next group game, Ballymena met Dalriada who were out for revenge after their defeat in the Mowbray Shield final only two days ago. However, Billy Wylie ensured it would be disappointment again for Dalriada, running in three fine tries which were all converted by Robert McCluney to record a 21 points to nil win. In the final group game, Ballymena faced a good Coleraine team with several very strong players. With confidence high, the boys got off to a good start with tries from Billy Wylie and Leo Smyth. Coleraine fought hard in what was a bruising encounter, scoring a late consolation try but Ballymena were deserved 12-5 winners.

In the semi-final Ballymena had a comfortable 31 points to nil win against Larne Grammar with 5 excellent tries by McCarey, Harrison, Madley, Smyth and Shaw. Special mentions to Zac Topping who made some barn storming runs, Reece Hunter with his dummy passes which bamboozled the Larne defence, and Nathan Glenn with three conversions.

The final was against Ballyclare High School who had earlier defeated Dalriada in their semi-final. Ballymena again started the match confidently. Deep in their own half, the ball was passed through the Ballymena back line to Dylan Harrison who beat his man and sprinted more than half the pitch to score under the posts. Dylan soon scored his second try when he was released through a good passing move and good work from the Ballymena pack who were excellent all day. Ballyclare fought back in the later stages, scoring a deserved try with the last play of the match, but Ballymena finished worthy 14-7 winners. Ballymena's Pearce Kane was named Player of the Tournament.

Group:

Ballymena U13's **33 – 0** Antrim Grammar

Try scorers: Dylan Harrison (2), Patrick McCarey, Pearce Kane (2). Convs: Robert McCluney (3)

Ballymena U13's **21 – 0** Dalriada

Try scorers: Billy Wylie (3) Convs: Robert McCluney (3)

Ballymena U13's **12 – 5** Coleraine GS

Try scorers: Billy Wylie, Leo Smyth Convs: Robert McCluney (1)

Semi-Final:

Ballymena U13's **31 – 0** Larne GS

Try scorers: P McCarey, D Harrison, A Madley, L Smyth, O Shaw. Conversions: Nathan Glenn (3)

Final:

Ballymena U13's **14-7** Ballyclare HS

Try scorers: Dylan Harrison (2). Conversions: Robert McCluney (2)

(Report by: Leo Smyth)

Saturday 19th March 2022: The Mowbray Shield (held at Foyle College)



On a beautiful sunny morning, Foyle College hosted the Mowbray Shield Under 13 tournament. Eight teams were split into two groups of four, with the top two teams progressing into the semi-finals. The Ballymena team played some excellent rugby in the group stages, defeating City of Derry, Foyle College and Enniskillen to progress as group winners. There were some memorable tries for Billy Wylie, Leo Smyth, Zac Topping, Pearce Kane, Alexander Madley, Patrick McCarey, Ollie Shaw, and Alex Comisky during the group stages.

In the semi-final, Ballymena faced a pumped-up Coleraine team. The Coleraine team used the strong wind to their advantage, kicking into the corners and putting the Ballymena team under some pressure in the early stages. However, the Ballymena boys stayed calm and kept their shape, countering with some running rugby, setting up Patrick McCarey to score an excellent try after a fine run down the wing. Ballymena struck another hammer blow just before half time – Pearce Kane made a strong run into the Coleraine twenty-two which led to a series of rumbles, bringing Ballymena to the 5-metre line. Jamie Gregg called for the overlap and passed out to Billy Wylie who made a good run to score the second try after fantastic build up play. Ballymena closed out the match in the second half with two more fine trys from Ollie Shaw and Billy Wylie. The match was refereed by a strong female official which was a new experience for the boys.

In the final Ballymena faced Dalriada. After two close games earlier in the season, this was expected to be another close encounter. With the wind behind, Ballymena pressed the Dalriada line in the early stages. Leo Smyth picked up the ball from a rumble to cross the line to score the opening try for Ballymena and Billy Wylie converted from a difficult angle. Soon after, Pearce Kane scored a second try for Ballymena, handing off several tackles in the process. The conversion gave Ballymena a 14-nil lead at half time. In the second half the Ballymena team defied the strong wind in their faces. After a strong thirty-yard run, Reuben Skelly set up Billy Wylie who powered through the

Dalriada defence to score the third try which was converted by Robert McCluney to give Ballymena an unassailable lead. Two more well worked tries followed for Ballymena, scored by Dylan Harrison and Billie Wylie again, rounding off another excellent team performance to win the trophy. All members of the squad made strong contributions during the day, including several players who stepped up from the B team. Remarkably, the team did not concede a single point during their five games! (Report by: Leo Smyth)

Group:

City of Derry **0 – 33** Ballymena U13's

Try scorers: Billy Wylie (3), Leo Smyth, Pearce Kane. Convs: Robert McCluney (4)

Foyle College **0 – 26** Ballymena U13's

Try scorers: A Madley, P Kane, Zac Topping, P McCarey. Convs: Robert McCluney (3)

Enniskillen **0 – 35** Ballymena U13's

Try scorers: D Harrison, B Wylie, P Kane, O Shaw, A Comisky. Convs: Robert McCluney (5)

Semi-Final:

Coleraine GS **0-24** Ballymena U13's

Try scorers: Billy Wylie (2), Patrick McCarey, Ollie Shaw Conversions: Robert McCluney (2)

Final:

Dalriada **0-35** Ballymena U13's

Try scorers: L Smyth, P Kane, D Harrison, B Wylie (2). Conversions: R McCluney (3), B Wylie (2)

Thursday 10th March 2022: Methody U13's Cup

On a sunny day, 8 teams competed in the Methody U13 Cup. The format was two groups of four teams competing in 20 minute games, with the top two teams from each group qualifying for the semi-finals. In the Ballymena group was Wallace, Enniskillen and Belfast Inst.

The Ballymena boys started well with a narrow win against a strong Enniskillen team, with Ruari Sims scoring in the corner after teamwork coming from a penalty. Ballymena held on with some trademark defending in the second half to get the vital win.

The next game against Wallace was more comfortable, with Patrick McCarey scoring a brace of tries. There were also tries for Alexander Madley and Pearce Kane and two conversions for Robert McCluney. Wallace scored a consolation try.

In the last group game against Belfast Inst, the final score line did not reflect the closeness of the match. Ballymena were inches away from scoring the opening try and had much of the possession in the first half. Inst scored a counter attacking try just before half time. Ballymena tired in the second half with Inst scoring two further tries.

In the semi- final, Ballymena faced Methody who they had beaten two matches to one during the regular season. Perhaps encouraged by their home support, Methody were very physical, scoring tries either side of half time. Ballymena played some great flowing rugby during the second half but

were frustrated by the Methody defence. The game did end positively though with Dylan Harrison running the length of the pitch to score for Ballymena with the last play of the game.

The Ballymena boys were a bit disappointed but there were lots of positives from their first tournament. Methody and Belfast Inst went on to share the Cup in the final. (Report by: Leo Smyth)

Group:

Enniskillen	0 – 5	Ballymena U13's (Try scorers: Ruari Sims)
Wallace	7-24	Ballymena U13's (Try scorers: Pearce Kane, Alexander Madley, Patrick McCarey 2). Conversions: Robert McCluney (2)
Belfast Inst	19-0	Ballymena U13's

Semi-Final:

Methody	14-7	Ballymena U13's (Try scorers: Dylan Harrison) Conversions: Robert McCluney
---------	------	--

Saturday 5th March 2022: Campbell College U13A's 5-24 Ballymena U13A's

On a beautiful sunny morning in Belfast, Ballymena U13A's defeated their Campbell counterparts 24-5. Patrick McCarey opened the scoring with a fine run down the wing after some good passing through the backs. After a great run from Pearce Kane and some good link up play, Jamie Gregg exploited the space down the right flank to score Ballymena's second try. Patrick McCarey scored the third try just before half time after more good handling from the backs. In the second half, a brilliant solo try from Billy Wylie closed out the game. Robert McCluney added to Campbell's misery by scoring his second conversion. Perhaps Ballymena took their foot off the gas, with Campbell having a good spell at the end of the game and scoring a consolation try. Honourable mentions to Zac Topping who made many bursting runs through the Campbell defence and Ethan Chen who came on in the second half for his debut. With 15 wins, 1 draw and 3 losses, this was the last game of the regular season. We look forward to the upcoming Methody Cup tournament and the chance to defeat Belfast Inst who are the only team that Ballymena have not yet beaten.

(Report by: Leo Smyth)

Try scorers: Patrick McCarey (2), Jamie Gregg (1), Billy Wylie (1)

Conversions: Robert McCluney (2)

Saturday 26th February 2022: RBAI U13A's 12-10 Ballymena U13A's

The U13A's narrowly lost a very evenly contested match 12-10 away to RBAI. Ballymena scored first just before half time after some crisp passing fed the ball to Patrick McCarey who jinked through the RBAI defenders to break through and score. RBAI started the second half brightly, with their dangerous centre scoring a fine individual try under the posts. They followed this up soon after with a second try. The Ballymena heads did not drop. After several close attempts through rumbles, Ollie Shaw drove over to score in the corner to make it two tries for each team. This led to a very tense

final few minutes but RBAI held on for the win with their one conversion proving crucial in the windy conditions. (Report by: Leo Smyth)

Try scorers: Patrick McCarey (1), Ollie Shaw (1)

Conversions: None

Monday 7th February 2022: Dalriada U13A's 7-7 Ballymena U13A's

The U13A's played out a hard fought 7-7 draw with Dalriada. Dalriada were out for revenge, having narrowly lost to Ballymena earlier in the season. Dalriada scored first, intercepting a Ballymena pass. Despite numerous attacks and pressure, Ballymena could not break through in the first half. Dalriada started stronger in the second half, but the Ballymena boys defended resolutely. Things began to click for Ballymena in the final quarter of the game. Ruari Simms broke through the Dalriada line to set up Dylan Harrison who finished superbly, scoring under the posts. Ballymena almost scored again in the final seconds to win it, but overall a draw was a decent result.

(Report by: Leo Smyth)

Try scorers: Dylan Harrison (1)

Conversions: Robert McCluney (1)

Saturday 22nd January 2022: Ballymena U13A's 24-0 Methody U13A's

The U13A's battled to a 24 points to nil victory over Methody. This was probably the most anticipated fixture of the season, with both teams having one victory each from earlier matches in the season. There was no score after 15 minutes despite both teams playing good rugby. The deadlock was broken by Billy Wylie who powered through for an excellent try for Ballymena which he converted himself. A hard-earned second try was scored by Leo Smyth after good work by the forwards, giving Ballymena a 12 points to nil advantage at half time. The Ballymena boys' heads were up at the start of the second half and a lovely team move saw the ball pass through the back line and finished off superbly by Patrick McCarey on the wing. After sustained pressure on the Ballymena try line, the Methody hearts were broken when Billy Wylie ran almost the full length of the pitch to score Ballymena's fourth try which Nathan Glenn converted. (Report by: Leo Smyth)

Try scorers: Billy Wylie (2), Leo Smyth (1), Patrick McCarey (1)

Conversions: Billy Wylie (1) Nathan Glenn (1)



Saturday 15th January 2022: Sullivan Upper U13A's 5-17 Ballymena Academy U13A's

The U13A's continued their winning streak with a 17 points to 5 away victory over Sullivan Upper. Several regular players were missing due to injuries or Covid. This gave an opportunity to some players to step up from the B team, all of whom performed well. The score line flattered Sullivan slightly as Ballymena were 'held up' when crossing the try line on five occasions – the Ballymena boys believed at least two of these were legitimate tries! Pearce Kane put in another strong performance, scoring two tries and there was a trademark sprint down the wing and score from Patrick McCarey after the Ballymena pack stole the ball in the scrum on their own line. Sullivan never gave up and scored a consolation try near the end of the game. (Report by: Leo Smyth)

Try scorers: Pearce Kane (2), Patrick McCarey (1)

Conversions: Robert McCluney (1)

Wednesday 15th December 2021: Ballymena Academy U13A's 14-12 Dalriada U13A's

The U13A's completed a narrow victory by 14 points to 12 over the previously unbeaten Dalriada. The match was played under floodlights at Eaton Park which added to the occasion. After a period of continued pressure, the forwards created an overlap which the backs took advantage of with some quick passing to allow Patrick McCarey to score a well worked try. Dalriada came back with a try of their own before Ollie Shaw scored a second try for Ballymena after another good team move. In the second half Dalriada got a converted try with two minutes to go to set up a tense finale but Ballymena held on for a hard-fought win. Both teams enjoyed some food together afterwards in the clubhouse. (Report by: Leo Smyth)

Try scorers: Patrick McCarey (1), Ollie Shaw (1)

Conversions: Robert McCluney (2)

Saturday 11th December 2021: Campbell College U13A's 12-26 Ballymena Academy U13A's

The U13A's notched up another good away victory with a 26 points to 12 win over Campbell College. The home team started strongly, scoring the first two tries of the match. Ballymena showed good character to battle back well with two tries of their own before half time – both scored by the impressive Billie Wylie. Ballymena had the momentum in the second half, with Patrick McCarey scoring after a jinking run down the left wing. The win was sealed with Pearce Kane forcing his way over the line after a series of rumbles and good work by the forwards. **(Report by: Leo Smyth)**

Try scorers: Billy Wylie (2), Patrick McCarey (1), Reuben Skelly (1)

Conversions: Billy Wylie (3)

Saturday 4th December 2021: Wallace H.S. U13A's 0-41 Ballymena Academy U13A's

On a cold and blustery morning in Lisburn, Ballymena Academy U13A's defeated their Wallace counterparts by 41 points to nil. Five first half tries saw Ballymena take a commanding lead in the match. The Wallace team defended strongly in the second half, with only two further Ballymena scores despite constant pressure on their try line. It was a solid team performance from Ballymena, with special mention to Billy Wylie who scored 4 tries. **(Report by: Leo Smyth)**

Try scorers: Billy Wylie (4), Dylan Harrison (1), Pearce Kane (1), Ollie Shaw (1)

Conversions: Billy Wylie (1)

Season Results

21/03/22	NEBSSA Shield		Winners	(Win)
19/03/22	Mowbray Shield Tournament		Winners	(Win)
10/03/22	Methody Tournament		Semi-Finalists	(Lost)
05/03/22	Campbell College	5-24	Ballymena U13A	(Win)
26/02/22	RBAI U13A	12-10	Ballymena U13A	(Lost)
7/2/22	Dalriada U13A	7-7	Ballymena U13A	(Draw)
22/01/22	Ballymena U13A	24-0	Methody U13 A	(Win)
15/01/22	Sullivan Upper	5-17	Ballymena U13A	(Win)
15/12/21	Ballymena U13A	14-12	Dalriada	(Win)
11/12/21	Campbell College	12-26	Ballymena U13A	(Win)
4/12/21	Wallace H.S.	0-41	Ballymena U13A	(Win)
27/11/21	Belfast H.S.	7-29	Ballymena U13A	(Win)
20/11/21	Rainey	7-19	Ballymena U13A	(Win)
6/11/21	Methody College	25-14	Ballymena U13A	(Lost)
23/10/21	Ballymena U13A	70-0	Sullivan	(Win)
16/10/21	Ballymena U13A	21-0	Campbell College	(Win)
11/10/21	B.R.A	7-21	Ballymena U13A	(Win)
9/10/21	Ballymena U13A	47-0	Methody College	(Win)
2/10/21	Ballymena U13A	29-0	Coleraine G.S.	(Win)
25/9/21	Bangor G.S	0-66	Ballymena U13A	(Win)
18/9/21	Ballymena U13A	5-12	Belfast Inst	(Lost)
11/9/21	Ballymena U13A		Wallace HS	(Win)