

Cavan hold on for a draw

Swellan park was the venue for Cavan 1st XV league fixture with Lurgan who were the visitors on this occasion.

In the past this particular encounter has always been a closely fought contest and this game proved to be no different. From the opening whistle both sets of forwards contested hotly at the break down for passion. With only ten minutes of the game gone the Cavan pack created a good attacking platform for centre Tumailie Tasola score a break away try. Steven Ivers stepped up to slot the conversion to make the score 7 – 0 to the home side.

Two minutes later Lurgan was awarded a penalty which they converted. This was followed up by a soft try when Cavan's concentration appeared to lapse and Lurgan capitulated on the poor tackling. The conversion was unsuccessful and the score line at this point read Cavan 7, Lurgan 8. While there was only a point in it the home side looked the more dominant and that is was only a matter of time before they would really impose themselves on the game. The next scoring opportunity was created by Cavan's out half, Selesie Tuipulotu, when he went on a jinking run beating no less than four Lurgan defenders to score under the post. This was to be his last action in the game as he retired with hamstring trouble shortly afterwards, which meant that Cavan were now down to 14 men.

Once again Steven Ivers made good the conversion. With only minutes to go until the end of the first half Cavan was awarded a penalty on half way. Martin O'Reilly, who plays second row for Cavan, stepped up to take the kick which proved to be an excellent decision by captain Robbie Beatty as Martin dissected the uprights with a magnificent boot of the ball. That left Cavan going in at half time 18 points to 8 in their favour. The second half began with some tight exchanges and early on in the half the ball broke down in midfield, Cavan secured possession and Tumailie Tasola made a break on the blind side which found Francie Murray in open space. Francie made no mistake on receiving the ball from Tumailie and scored what should have been the match winner. Unfortunately the conversion attempt was unsuccessful on this occasion.

Tensions were running a little high at this point and as a result of an off the ball incident Cavan wing forward Gary Browne was sin binned. Cavan were now down to 13 players and as luck would have it ended up having to finish the game in that position. When his ten minutes were up Gary Browne was unable to take the field as his altercation had led him to have mild concussion. Lurgan tails were up and they proceeded to score two relatively soft tries maximizing their two man advantage.

With 8 minutes remaining the game was now tied at 21 points apiece. The home sides were forced to dig deep and this they did to a man and defended their line at all cost. When the final whistle blew for full time there were sighs of relief from the Cavan coaching staff and now it was time for thoughts of what might have been. Under the circumstances a draw was not a bad result on this occasion.