



Boys' Hockey

Ulster Schools' McCullough Cup Final



Royal Belfast Academical Institution 2 – 2 Banbridge Academy (RBAI won penalty shoot-out 5-4)

The boys' hockey 1st XI failed to retain the Ulster Schools' McCullough Cup in the sixtieth edition of the competition when they agonisingly fell to defeat against RBAI after a penalty shoot-out. The Academy boys' route to the final had been incident-free including an impressive 8-0 victory over Bangor Grammar School in the semi-final, so the squad was full of confidence especially as they had already defeated RBAI in both of their previous encounters during the season.

The game started with Banbridge on the front-foot and they took the lead when captain Matthew McKee carried the ball from his own half and fired a reverse stick shot past the Inst goalkeeper. RBAI equalised from a penalty corner drag flick but McKee restored the Academy's advantage when he scored again from the edge of the circle, this time with an open side drive.

RBAI offered little threat from open play,



but their obvious game plan of looking for penalty corners paid dividends when they equalised midway through the second half from a set-piece variation. As the game neared full-time, the Academy attacked at will but the killer final pass failed to materialise and the match ended 2-2, resulting in the lottery of a penalty shootout. Denver Golbey saved two of the RBAI run-ins, with Matthew Stevenson, Tommy Dobson, James Evans and Matthew McKee scoring for the Academy but alas RBAI ran out 5-4 winners to take the cup back to Belfast.

The Academy players, and head coach Simon Jess, were devastated to lose their title but they had little time to feel sorry for themselves as the Ulster Schools' Burney Cup hits off were in less than two weeks.

Squad: Denver Golbey, Connor Part, Matthew Stevenson, Aaron Baxter, Ben Walker, Ben Thompson, Max Nicholson, Tom Hamilton, Tommy Dobson, Matthew McKee (captain), Lukas Moles, Matthew Spence, Ben Farson, Adam McKee, Josh Brownlee, Ben Pollock, James Evans, Jake Rainer.

Boys' Hockey

Banbridge Academy Boys' Bring the Tasmanian Shield Home



The EMTEK sponsored, Banbridge Academy Boys' Hockey 1st XI, travelled to Cork in October to take part in the All Ireland Schoolboy Championship. This prestigious tournament takes part over 3 days, the gruelling competition schedule demands extreme levels of fitness, with the potential for 5 games in just 72 hours. The top 16 teams from the island of Ireland are split into 4 groups, with just the top team from each group qualifying for the semi-finals.

Banbridge Academy's group included Middleton College (Munster), Sullivan Upper (Ulster) and Wesley College (Leinster). The first group game saw them face Middleton College at Middleton's home pitch. Despite vocal home support for Middleton, Banbridge started the game on the front foot, with an energetic press forcing their opposition to make mistakes and give opportunities for the pacy forwards to capitalise. A high defensive line ensured any Middleton threats were dealt with swiftly, often leading to instant counter attacks. In a dominant performance Banbridge won 9-0 (Adam McKee x3, Jake Rainer x2, Joshua Brownlee, Lukas Moles, Matthew McKee, Matthew Stevenson), giving the squad great confidence for the rest of the group games.

On day 2 the Academy played Ulster rivals Sullivan Upper. Sullivan were very

disciplined in their defence, working hard to limit opportunities for the Academy forward line. Patient passing work, combined with strong forward movement ensured the Academy side still put pressure on the Sullivan keeper. Sullivan pushed hard on counter attacks to gain their own chances, with some excellent solo runs, however the Academy defence were always on hand to thwart Sullivan advances. As the game wore on, the Academy's relentless pressure took its toll on a tiring Sullivan defence with the final score ending 7-0 (James Evans, Matthew Stevenson x2, Josh Brownlee, Adam McKee, Tommy Dobson, Jake Rainer).

The group decider saw Banbridge Academy face old rivals Wesley College. Wesley had also beaten Middleton (5-0) and Sullivan (6-1), leaving all to play for in the final match, with little to tell between the two sides group results. From the first whistle it was evident that the Academy had only one thing on their mind, dominating possession, with high tempo play and excellent off the ball work making it extremely difficult for Wesley. This paid off, with the Academy taking an early lead. Wesley showed their quality by rallying to shut off shooting opportunities and advancing up the pitch to create chances of their own. They were rewarded with 3 short corners in quick succession, but the Academy



defence dealt with them well, quickly turning possession into counter attacks and ending the half 3-0. The Academy's relentless pressure soon told and in the second half they dominated a tiring Wesley College. The goal tally quickly rose to 6, stunning a shell-shocked Wesley. With a rallied effort, Wesley gained a consolation goal towards the end of the match making the score 6-1. However the Academy would deal the last blow, when on the final whistle they ensured a decisive short corner made it 7-1 (Ben Pollock, Adam McKee, Matthew Stevenson x2, Matthew McKee x2, Jake Rainer).



After topping the group Banbridge Academy were drawn against another Ulster team in their semi final, Wallace High School, with two Leinster teams making up the other Semi, Kings Hospital and Dublin High School. Wallace were highly organised in their defence, which caused the usual free flowing attacks of Banbridge Academy to stumble. Despite lots of possession Banbridge were rushing their opportunities and getting frustrated by the excellent discipline of the Wallace defensive line. Wallace were also quick to counter, with pace and skill upfront. On a quick attack Wallace caught the Academy defence off guard and finished well to take the lead. The Academy side started to find their game, but struggled to make any meaningful chances, with the ball firing loosely across goal and causing little threat to the Wallace keeper. The final quarter started with Wallace still 1-0 up, however, the Academy had worked hard to get their normal style of play going and chances soon started to build pressure on the Wallace defence. Two quick fire goals saw them swing the advantage in their favour, taking a narrow one goal lead. Wallace rallied hard to try and find the equaliser, but when a late short corner was well saved it was the Academy who secured their place in the final, winning 2-1 (James Evans x2)

Dublin High School won their semi final vs Kings Hospital in another close game, winning 1-0.

The final started with a period of dominance for Banbridge Academy, who were using the channels well and quickly turning possession into advances on goal. A foul in front of the keeper saw a stroke converted to give the Academy a 1-0 lead in the 1st quarter. Dublin High found their feet in the second quarter and began to put pressure on the Academy defence, forcing good tackles to keep them at bay. Following strong

team play, the Banbridge side doubled their lead to make it 2-0. However, Dublin High were not going to step aside and rallied their efforts to dominate the final minutes of the half. This saw them convert a good short corner, opening the game up for an exciting second half. The game flowed from end to end throughout the rest of the match, the Academy failing to make the most of possession, with balls passing the back post without a forward able to capitalise. Whilst the Academy defence were able to prevent open play chances, they fell to another short corner in the final quarter, which brought the game level at 2-2 (James Evans, Matthew Spence). The game continued with chances for both teams, but neither could prevent the deadlock, so shuttle runs were needed to split the teams after full time. It was the Academy who would show the most composure, with goalkeeper Denver Golby forcing two misses from Dublin High School, whilst Tommy Dobson, Adam McKee and James Evans netted their chances. This left it to vice captain, Matthew Stevenson, to win the title for Banbridge Academy. He showed nerves of steel to force the Dublin High goalkeeper to ground before calmly walking the ball around him and into an open net. Jubilant scenes followed with Academy players, staff and supporters rushing the pitch to celebrate being the 2022 All Ireland Champions.

When asked about their title campaign the team captain, Matthew McKee, said, "We had to fight hard to come through 5 matches in 3 days but our squad is very strong and everyone played their part. I and a few others struggled with injuries but the coaching and medical staff kept us going to the end. Winning the Irish Schools' is the dream of any schoolboy hockey player in Ireland and we feel so privileged to have brought the Tasmanian Shield back to the Academy for the sixth time in the competition's

40 year history. I want to thank my teammates, our head coach Mr Jess and manager Mr Walker for making this possible."

Mr Robin McLoughlin OBE, praised the boys for their resilience after losing the All-Ireland Final last year on run-ins to come back and win on run-ins demonstrates the fantastic character of the whole squad. He declared this a tremendous achievement and congratulated Matthew and the entire squad, as well as their Coach (Mr Simon Jess) Manager (Mr Colin Walker) and Assistant Coach (Mr John Clarke).

The coaching staff and players of Banbridge Academy would especially like to thank all parents and supporters who made the long trip to Cork to cheer on the team. To celebrate occasions like this with them makes it even more special.



Boys' Hockey

2nd XI

M. Miskelly

We started the season hoping to go one better than last year, after having won the Prior Shield and losing out in the Dowdall Cup final. We hadn't lost many from the Prior Shield winning team last season and many of our panel were pushing for a spot on the 1stXI squad.

With commitment and hard work at training throughout the season, we progressed through each competition with relative ease until the later stages.

In the Prior Shield we came up against a battling Royal and Prior team, which ended up 2-2 after we took the lead. This led to our first set of run ins in any competition, not having practised any we still managed to go through with Simon Ferris, Josh Cash and Lewis Groves scoring. We then faced a tough game away to Sullivan Upper, winning 2-1 in a game where we had a lot of possession but struggled to finish. This led to a Havelock final against Wallace HS, who had beaten us the previous year in the Dowdall. With demons to banish and buoyed by our new kit, thanks to Leiber Medical, we played some great team hockey and reaped revenge on a good Wallace side. As a result, we retained the Prior Shield for another year.

In the Dowdall Cup our closest game was away to Bangor in the Semi-final. Having dominated the game and possession, our lack of ability to finish resulted in Bangor levelling the scores at 1-1 with 5 minutes left. We failed to score again in full time, leading to the dreaded run ins.

Step forward James McCoy in goal who made some great saves to secure our spot in the Final after some very poor run ins. Another Havelock final in the Dowdall cup awaited us against Friends'. A fantastic team performance with a super hat trick from Jake Rainer, led to team Captain Daniel McHugh lifting the Dowdall Cup therefore completing the Double and capping off a fantastic season-one which I will not forget.

I want to pay particular credit to the Year 14 leavers and their contribution



to school hockey throughout the years. I wish them the very best for the future.

- Daniel McHugh - for his commitment and dedication to all aspects of training and Captaincy.
- Lewis Cousins - for his support for Daniel as Vice-Captain, his work ethic and commitment to the team.
- Joshua Moles - the rock at the heart of our defence.
- Thomas Cunningham (TC) - the Tasmanian devil in midfield.
- Adam Trimble - the fan favourite.
- Tom Hamilton - Mr Reliable in defence.
- Ben Farson - the steadying influence in midfield.
- Simon Ferris - always gives 100%, I have never seen anyone cover as much ground.
- Jake Rainer - the pacey player 'Billy Whizz' of the team.
- Conor Doyle - Footballer turned Hockey player.
- Conor Part - for stepping up to play an important role in the Prior Shield final.

There is no doubt of the benefit that being involved in team sport brings to both our physical and mental health. I encourage the guys to continue playing as long as they can and look forward to what next year brings.

CAPTAIN'S REPORT - DANIEL MCHUGH
Banbridge Academy 2XI had an

extremely successful 2022-23 season, winning the two available trophies in an unbeaten season. Whilst our squad was largely made up of experienced Year 14 players, younger players such as Mark Hanna and Josh Cash also had impressive seasons. In an effort to retain the Prior Shield, strong performances over tough sides such as Friends' and Sullivan were necessary. The final, at Havelock Park was won 4-1 against Wallace HS, an effort of revenge following the defeat in the same fixture last season. A notable display came from Simon Ferris scoring two of the four goals.

Our Dowdall Cup campaign was a short but sweet one, following a bye in the first round and Regent House conceding the quarter final. We faced Bangor Grammar in the Semi Final in our tightest game of the season finishing 1-1 in regular time, coming away with a 2-1 victory in penalty run-ins. James McCoy Year 12, stepped up and made four impressive saves. In the Dowdall Final we were victorious in defeating Friends' 2XI 4-0 with a stellar hat-trick from Jake Rainer. We finished the season with eleven leavers on the pitch in a great way to conclude our seven year school career. I would like to thank Mr Miskelly for the time and effort he has put in during the past three years, and to thank my teammates for the most enjoyable season of my hockey career with the best group of lads. I wish the team every success next season.



Boys' Hockey

Ulster Schools' Prior Shield Final



Wallace High School 1 – 4 Banbridge Academy

The Boys' Hockey 2nd XI retained the Prior Shield by defeating Lisburn's Wallace High School 2nd XI 4 goals to 1 at Havelock Park. Mark Miskelly's troops were in top form this season, going undefeated thus far. Nevertheless, there were many nerves before hit-off as the squad was decimated – captain Daniel McHugh injured his hamstring in training, defender Caleb Briggs broke a finger, Max Nicholson and Jake Rainer were promoted to the 1st XI and on the morning of the final regular goalkeeper James McCoy withdrew due to illness. Connor Part stepped in to keep goal, with Daniel Reid and Sam Bingham added to the squad.

The Academy side, lining out in their new Leber Medical sponsored playing kit, started the game well with some slick passing but a defensive slip saw a penalty corner awarded to Wallace. The Lisburn side scored from a switched set-

piece to give them the lead at quarter time. However, minutes into the second period Thomas Cunningham burst into the opposition circle and his slash shot was deflected home by Simon Ferris to pull the Academy level. Ollie Small then saw his back post position nearly pay dividends, but the ball just trickled wide. Cunningham and Conor Doyle were now dominating the midfield and after they released Tom Hamilton, his cross flashed across the front of goal just out of the reach of Joshua Cash and Sam Bingham.

The second half saw the Academy boys on the front foot, with only the odd counterattack for the impressive defensive duo of Joshua Moles and Lewis Cousins to easily sweep up. Alfie Norris added a further threat upfront after his introduction and his presence helped Bann win another penalty corner. Noah Lutton subsequently scored with an eloquent reverse stick shot to put the

Academy ahead for the first time. Not to be outdone, Daniel Reid scored with an equally impressive reverse effort from open play to increase the lead and with minutes left on the clock, Adam Trimble's delightful lay-off saw Ferris score his second and put the game to bed as the Academy supporters cheered on the quality of the play.

So for the second consecutive season, Cousins lifted the Prior Shield for the Academy along with the unfortunate McHugh. Mark Miskelly was thrilled with the effort and end-product from his forward line.

Squad: Connor Part, Lewis Cousins, Joshua Moles, Tom Hamilton, Noah Lutton, Adam Trimble, Mark Hanna, Thomas Cunningham, Conor Doyle, Simon Ferris, Joshua Cash, Ollie Small, Alfie Norris, Adam Ireland, Sam Bingham, Daniel Reid.

Boys' Hockey

Ulster Schools' Dowdall Cup Final



Banbridge Academy 2nd XI 4 – 0 Friends' School Lisburn

The current Prior Shield holders faced off against a strong Friends' School Lisburn squad in the final of the Ulster Hockey Dowdall Cup at Havelock Park. After losing this final last season, many of the boys came into the game hungry for revenge. Eleven players in the squad were from Year 14, including captain Daniel McHugh who was returning from injury, so it was all or nothing for the 2nd XI with most of the boys knowing this was their last ever fixture for the school.

The first quarter began with plenty of chances for both teams. Vice Captain Lewis Cousins was to have a busy afternoon dealing with aerial threats from FSL but he cleaned up extremely effectively throughout the game. Banbridge tested the keeper a couple times but failed to be clinical in the circle.

In the second quarter the Academy really started to take control by moving the ball wide with pace, creating plenty of chances. One of these chances resulted in a short corner, which Jake Rainer fired

into the side netting (giving the Friends' goalkeeper no chance) to put Bann 1-0 in front. From the restart Friends' tried to advance the ball quickly but Tom Hamilton intercepted and was alert to find Rainer in space and his blistering pace caught the Friends' defence off guard, allowing him to score his second with a chip over the advancing keeper – 2-0 to the Academy at half-time.

By the third quarter Bann were in full control with the centre back partnership of Cousins and Josh Moles dealing with any Friends' attack easily. Some great play from Thomas Cunningham and Conor Doyle resulted in Simon Ferris finding himself with space in the circle to sweep a reverse around the keeper to give Banbridge a three goal advantage.

The fourth quarter saw the introduction of a fan favourite, Adam Trimble, who calmly slotted into the left back role and neatly cleaned up any threats that came his direction. With a few minutes left on the clock, Rainer was still hungry for

his hat-trick and drove from just inside the halfway line at a tired FSL defence before slotting a reverse stick drive into the bottom corner. The game finished with all eleven leavers on the pitch, in what was a great way for the boys to end their school hockey careers after 7 years. Jake Rainer was undoubtedly the man of the match with his hat-trick in a resounding 4-0 victory. With Daniel McHugh and Lewis Cousins lifting the Dowdall Cup it signified the end of an historical unbeaten season for Leber Medical sponsored Banbridge Academy Boys' Hockey 2nd XI and head coach Mr Mark Miskelly.

Squad: James McCoy(GK), Connor Part(GK), Lewis Cousins(VC), Joshua Moles, Noah Luton, Tom Hamilton, Adam Trimble, Thomas Cunningham, Conor Doyle, Ben Farson, Mark Hanna, Simon Ferris, Jake Rainer, Daniel McHugh(C), Ollie Small, Joshua Cash, Adam Ireland, Daniel Reid.



Boys' Hockey

U14

This year the U14s were led by Mr Clarke with coaching from Mr Barlow, Mr Jess and Mr Walker. The team had a rocky start to the season by playing some top teams like Cookstown and R.B.A.I.; they had a couple of tight games with Friends' School, Lisburn, Sullivan and Bangor during the friendlies at the start of the season.



They played Friends' in the first round of the Ferris Cup, with a draw to them earlier in the season, they knew that the Cup tie could go either way. With a short corner goal scored by Ross McCombe, they went 1-0 up; they had their best game of the season with Adam Liggett leading the back line and they fought for every ball until eventually the second goal was scored by Matthew Patterson and the tie was over! They progressed to the quarter finals.

With Sullivan the following week, they were away to Hollywood. The team were off to an average start, until they went down 1-0 and the heads dropped. After half-time the score was the same

until they won a short corner and Shaun Ward put it past the post man and into the back of the net. From then the story was different; everyone was lively and fighting for every ball. With a ball from the midfield through the solid defence of Sullivan to Max Murphy, he was taken down through the goal by the goalkeeper and won a stroke. Shaun Ward stepped up calmly to slot it past the keeper.

They next had Cookstown in the semi-finals, with the whole team looking revenge from last year as they had put the team out early in the Bannister Bowl. Ross and Harry Gough had put them

in front within a minute of pass-backs with a bit of skill in the midfield and a ball played through to Harry Gough who slotted it across the keeper's body. Cookstown replied quickly with them getting an equaliser within minutes. The game started to slip away with a couple of quick-fire goals from Cookstown, who went on to win the Ferris Cup later the following week.

The U14s despite a difficult start to the season had performed well in the Ferris Cup and hope to progress as a team into next season and to continue playing their high intensity hockey, that was shown throughout the Cup season

U13

Played: 17, Won: 11, Drew: 4, Lost:

**Player of the Season – Daniel McKee
Most Improved Player – Ben Greer**

With full pitch 11-a-side hockey being a new concept for the Under 13 boys, this season started with a hard fought draw against Cookstown. Little did anyone know that the season would end in exactly the same manner – except that draw would be in the Bannister Bowl final, which Cookstown then stole in a penalty shootout.

After an early season defeat against RBAI, captain Adam Liggett rallied his troops and they completed the season with only one more defeat in normal time, when a depleted team lost at Bangor Grammar School. Superb friendly wins at Grosvenor, Friends', Sullivan and Wallace



set the team up well for their post-Christmas Bannister Bowl Cup campaign.

Goal scoring was never a problem, with Cameron Jones scoring six goals in one match and there were numerous hat-tricks for Jay Nicholson, Harvey McBride, Daniel McKee and Owen Dobson. Defensively few goals were conceded with Isaac Steele winning every duel, and Henry Farrell and Patrick Hart

improving as defenders in every match. The goalkeeping double-act of Oliver Wakeling and Alexander Love spent most of the games watching the play in front of them as they had little action to deal with. Oscar Niblock did the dogged hard work in midfield, ably supported by Year 8 pupils Rory Lawson, Will Megaw and Callum McCombe.

The Bannister Bowl matches started

Boys' Hockey

with a comprehensive win at Kilkeel High School. Owen Dobson scored a wonderful drag flick from a penalty corner and Harvey McBride scored two delightful goals; one a neat deflection past the advancing goalkeeper, and the other was all his own work after he stole the ball from a defender and smashed it past the keeper. Daniel McKee scored two goals, as did Jay Nicholson, with Ben Greer and Callum McCombe also getting on the scoresheet. The quarter final against Wallace High School was a much different affair. A nervy 1-1 draw, after a Harvey McBride equaliser, saw the game being decided in a penalty shootout with Daniel McKee, Harvey McBride and Oscar Niblock all scoring

as Oliver Wakeling saved three Wallace attempts. The semi final win at Methody was another dominant display as Daniel McKee got four goals with Harvey McBride(2), Owen Dobson and Callum McCombe also scoring.

As mentioned earlier, the Bannister Bowl final was against Cookstown High School. They started the game strongly and went two goals in front early on. Daniel McKee got a goal back just before half time to give confidence to the Academy boys and they went on to dominate the second half, but alas could not score enough goals to win. Owen Dobson did scramble in an equaliser but the dreaded penalty shootout did

not prove successful this time for the Academy.

I wish all the players the very best of luck next season in the Ferris Cup and there is no doubt enough talent in this group to be successful for many seasons to come.

Squad: Oliver Wakeling, Alexander Love, Adam Liggett(c), Isaac Steele, Henry Farrell, Patrick Hart, Ally McCann, Daniel McKee, Owen Dobson, Jay Nicholson, Oscar Niblock, Ben Greer, Harvey McBride, Cameron Jones, Callum McCombe, Will Megaw, Rory Lawson, Reuben Murdock.

Year 8 Boys' Hockey





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Boys' Hockey

Hockey Awards Dinner



1st XI Player of the Year: Matthew McKee pictured with Lee Tumilty, Head of Boys' Hockey Colin Walker and Principal Robin McLoughlin



1st XI Most Improved Player: Jake Rainer pictured with Lee Tumilty, Head of Boys' Hockey Colin Walker and Principal Robin McLoughlin



Matthew McKee: pictured receiving the Irish Schools' Captains Trophy with Lee Tumilty, Head of Boys' Hockey Colin Walker and Principal Robin McLoughlin



2nd XI Most Improved Player: James McCoy and Player of the Year Lewis Cousins pictured with Lee Tumilty, Head of Boys' Hockey Colin Walker and Principal Robin McLoughlin



U15 Most Improved Player: Stephen Grattan and Player of the Year Sam Bingham pictured with Lee Tumilty and Head of Boys' Hockey Colin Walker



U14 Most Improved Player: Matthew Patterson and Player of the Year Ross McCombe pictured with Lee Tumilty and Head of Boys' Hockey Colin Walker



U13 Most Improved Player: Ben Greer and Player of the Year Daniel McKee pictured with Lee Tumilty and Head of Boys' Hockey Colin Walker



U12 Most Improved Players: Elijah Miles James Patterson and Player of the Year: Will Megaw, pictured with Lee Tumilty and Head of Boys' Hockey Colin Walker



Top Goal Contributor: James Evans pictured with Lee Tumilty, Head of Boys' Hockey Colin Walker and Principal Robin McLoughlin



Clubman of the Year: Craig Campbell pictured with Lee Tumilty, Head of Boys' Hockey Colin Walker and Principal Robin McLoughlin