

1st XV Report

B.Leslie

Banbridge Academy 1st XV claimed the Schools' Trophy on a beautiful spring day at Roughfort, to transform what had been a challenging and difficult season into one for the history books. For the second time in four seasons they lifted the Schools' Trophy and brought home one of the four main schools' rugby prizes to the Lurgan Road.

The early season form did not hint at this later success however and a combination of a young team and numerous injuries throughout the season, meant we struggled for victories. The season began in August with our pre-season, which was once again well attended. The first fixtures for the 1st XV were at the Grosvenor tournament where we lost 0-5 to BRA, 0-19 to Wesley College from Dublin and drew 5-5 with Rainey Endowed. Our first full game of the season was against Portadown College, where we lost 18-5. Next up was Armagh Royal where we lost 33-3, but we were competitive for 50 minutes and were starting to show promise. This was followed by a similar 38-5 loss to Sullivan Upper. Next we played Wairoa College (a touring team from New Zealand) and in an entertaining game, after a ferocious Hakka, we lost 5-27.

The forwards were as follows: Props were John Wilson at loose head and Tom Lyttle at tight head. John lives life on the offside line but his enthusiasm is contagious and he is a thorn in the side of many an opposition backline. Vice-Captain Tom is a strong carrying forward who excels in the scrum. Corin Boardman also played many games as prop, deputising ably for one of the others, and his consistency and hard work were always an asset. The hooker was Timmy Beattie. Timmy is a busy robust character and he remarkably, and much to the chagrin of the backs, finished the season as the team's top scorer with 5 tries! He also won the Year 12 player of the year award. The 2nd Row combination was Ethan Cromie and Peter Heaney. Both players were the epitome of hard work and effort. Ethan's relentless tackle count and rucking, allied with Peter's ball carrying and

lineout lifting made them a formidable combination. Angus Corbett also played numerous games in the 2nd Row and his game improved dramatically as the season progressed and only injury prevented him from featuring more heavily in the Cup campaign. The back row was Jack Macaulay at No 8 and Jonny Campbell and Jonathan McIntosh on the flanks. Jack was another grafter who always gave his all, his ball carrying improved as the season went on and his lineout work was invaluable. Jack won the Clubman of the Year award at the end of season awards ceremony. Jonny Campbell loved nothing better than a big carry and an even bigger hit, while Jonny McIntosh was all action in defence and on the ground. Toby Baxter had an injury-plagued season but fought back to play a number of games in the Trophy campaign, and his work at the breakdown and turnover count was a real boost in that campaign. Both James Moore and Alex Mitchell played a number of times in the back-row and both are talented players who will feature much more next season.

Losses to Portora Royal, Lurgan College, Bangor Grammar, CUS and Coleraine Grammar were to follow before our first victory of the season at 41-0 win against Carrick Grammar. This was followed by a 7-0 loss to Belfast High School and then a battling 12-7 win against Wellington College. Defeats to Grosvenor and Dungannon were followed by a Christmas training game against Lurgan College, where we drew 0-0. Then in our final warm-up match, we lost 17-7 to Rainey Endowed.

The backs were as follows: The half-backs were Jordan Mount at Scrum Half and Ben Thompson at Out Half. Jordan is a balanced runner with an eye for a break and Ben is a good playmaker who also likes to challenge the defence. Both players matured as the season went on and both were playing their best rugby as the year finished. Christopher Patterson and Tom Flanagan deputised for these players throughout the season and both of these young players have talent galore and will put serious pressure on their

teammates for starting spots next year. The centres were Tommy Russell and Ross Cartmill. Tommy was the power 12 with his barrelling runs and his massive hits in defence and the perfect foil was Ross at outside centre with his deft touches and exquisite lines of running in attack. Ross won the Player of the Year award at the end of season awards ceremony. The wing berths were Captain Michael McGaffin, Troy Pinion with Jack Dolaghan, also playing most of the season when another back was injured. Michael unfortunately had an injury-plagued season, but his pace and leadership were invaluable in the Cup run once he regained full fitness. Troy has an excellent all-round game and his pace and strength were a real asset. Jack fitted well into the squad and proved his worth in both attack and defence. Ben Russell, older brother of Tommy, played full back and was key throughout the year. He was a strong runner and excellent in defence and his reliability under the high ball was a real fillip to the team. Andrew Rutledge, a talented outside back, also featured in the back three but injury almost ended his season until a miraculous recovery meant he was able to take his place in the squad for the Trophy campaign. Jamie Ewing and Scott Thompson also featured on many occasions and were always reliable in defence and effective in attack.

Schools' Cup

Our Cup camp was to be brief however, as we exited the Schools' Cup in the cruellest of fashions when Antrim Grammar landed a last ditch penalty to snatch a 16-15 victory in a competitive Schools' Cup 1st round game. Banbridge started the better and a driving maul ended with Jack Macaulay sneaking over in the corner after 7 minutes. On 22 minutes Antrim reduced the arrears with a penalty, before Academy Flanker Jonny Campbell barged over to make the score 10-3 to Banbridge. The second half started well for the Academy with Scrum Half Jordan Mount running in a great score to take Banbridge out to 15-3 but Antrim responded almost immediately with a converted try. On 55 minutes, Antrim closed the gap to 2

points with a penalty from Sam Gordon. Then, in the final play of the game, just as the Academy looked to have turned the ball over and won the match the referee awarded a penalty to Antrim for offside and they coolly slotted the kick and the final whistle blew. It was an incredibly disappointing way to lose the match but the team should be proud of their efforts and they fought to the very end. There was no denying however that the disappointment ran deep and the players set their minds on winning the Trophy competition, which they now entered as a result of the loss.

The Trophy Campaign

The 1st round saw a narrow 5-0 win over Wellington College. There was early Bann pressure but it brought no reward and mistakes from both sides in the contact made for a disjointed game. The 2nd half was all Banbridge, but again the Wellington defence was excellent. Eventually on 60 minutes the Academy penetrated and full back Ben Russell finished off a slick move. The Bann defence was able to see out the remainder of the game in the middle of the pitch.

The 2nd round saw a hard fought 27-10 win over Cambridge House from Ballymena. The game did not start well for the Academy however, as after only 7 minutes we were 10-0 down with a penalty and a converted try from Cambridge on 4 and 7 minutes respectively. This shock sparked the Academy into life however and despite playing into a severe headwind, they proceeded to march up the pitch with

great ball retention. The Cambridge defence held firm however and it was only on the stroke of halftime that Centre Ross Cartmill, the Academy's most threatening back, struck a beautiful line and crossed for the unconverted try. A buoyant Academy team came out all guns blazing in the second half and with the wind at their back, we always looked the winning team. Persistent pressure led to the first score on 45 minutes when a driving maul marched over and Prop John Wilson emerged with the ball. Then more pressure told on 50 minutes when 2nd Row Ethan Cromie barged over to stretch the lead and Out Half Ben Thompson converted. Again Bann piled on the pressure and this time Hooker Timmy Beattie burrowed over the line to claim another try and Thompson once again converted. The final scoring act was a 65th minute penalty from Thompson to take the Academy to 17 points clear and deservedly secure their place in the final.

The Final

The 1st XV lifted the prestigious Schools' Trophy after a hard fought but deserved 15-0 victory over Belfast High School. The final, on Wednesday 24th February, was played at BRA's Roughfort pitches in front of a large and enthusiastic crowd. The chilly but fine weather, and excellent playing surface, meant conditions would not be a factor in deciding the result and the best team would win and that proved to be the case as it was the Academy who played the best rugby and claimed the trophy for the 2nd time in 4 years. The Belfast

High team was to the fore in the very early stages, as Banbridge struggled to settle and made a few early errors. Soon however the Co. Down team settled into their rhythm and after a couple of good attacking phases they were awarded a penalty on 12 minutes. Unfortunately out half Ben Thompson was just wide with the attempt, but the Academy kept field position and just three minutes later a flowing backline move resulted in full back Ben Russell making a fine line break and linking with wing Troy Pinion, who crossed the line for the opening score. Thompson was on target with the conversion and put Banbridge out to a 7-0 lead. The rest of the half was fairly even with both teams having phases of possession but neither really able to do any damage and the only scoring opportunity was on 25 minutes, when Belfast High hit the post with a long range penalty effort. The final few minutes of the half saw Belfast High really pressurise the Academy line and only resolute and brave defence kept them at bay and that was quite possibly the turning point in the game. The 2nd Half started well for the Academy and early territorial dominance led to a great lineout steal from flanker Jonny McIntosh on 40 minutes. He popped the pilfered ball to scrum half Jordan Mount who set his backline off on the counter attack. After three good wide passes, Captain and wing Michael McGaffin received the ball, fended off his opposite number, and then outpaced the cover to score in the corner. A well taken try that really put the Academy in the driving seat. Thompson was unsuccessful with the difficult conversion but the 13-0 advantage was a great fillip for the Banbridge team.

To Belfast High School's credit they then produced their best rugby of the day and only dogged defence from the Academy kept them out. On 55 minutes, during one of High School's forays into Academy territory, Banbridge Centre Ross Cartmill read a long pass and intercepted to go some 80 metres before being brought down just short of the posts. In the ensuing ruck High School infringed and Thompson slotted the simple but pressurised kick to give Banbridge a 15-0 lead and the cushion they had so greatly been craving. The final 15 minutes saw Belfast High go all out in attack but once again the outstanding Banbridge defence kept them at bay and the Academy saw out the rest of the game to claim the trophy.





Thanks

I would like to take this opportunity to thank a few people for their invaluable help throughout the season. Firstly thanks to Mr Roy Stevenson for all his coaching and help. Thanks also to Mr Andrew Craig and Mr Michael Ross for all their hard work with the 2nd XV and for their help with the 1st XV. The team's gratitude goes also to Mr Baxter for all his advice and assistance during the year in all areas. Thanks to all the parents and relatives for their support, both vocal and otherwise, throughout the season. Thanks also to the Academy Association, and Mr Alan Stevenson in particular, who hosted the BBQ and provided teas and coffees at our Cup and Trophy games. Thanks also to Mr Mike Bentley of MB Training for all his hard work with the fitness and conditioning of the senior squad. Finally thanks to the caretakers, and John in particular, for their hard work on Saturday mornings looking after the changing areas and providing teas and coffee. Without the help of these people we could not have had such a successful and enjoyable season.

Belfast High should be very proud of their efforts and their team's attitude during and after the game should be commended.

In the trophy presentation ceremony Banbridge Academy Captain Michael McGaffin lifted the cup to the delight of the assembled supporters and to the cheers of his teammates. An excellent way to end the season for a Banbridge Academy side that had been tested throughout the year, through both results and injuries, but whose hard work and dedication ultimately brought reward.

The full Academy squad that day was as follows:

1 John Wilson, 2 Timmy Beattie, 3 Tom Lyttle, 4 Peter Heaney, 5 Ethan Cromie, 6 Jonathan Campbell, 7 Jonathan McIntosh, 8 Jack Macaulay, 9 Jordan Mount, 10 Ben Thompson, 11 Troy Pinion, 12 Thomas Russell, 13 Ross Cartmill, 14 Michael McGaffin (Capt), 15 Ben Russell. Replacements 16 Scott Buchannon, 17 Corin Boardman, 18 Stuart Totten, 19 Toby Baxter, 20 Alex Mitchell, 21 Tom Flanagan, 22 Jack Dolaghan, 23 Andrew Rutledge

At the end of the season the annual leavers' match was once again a sight to behold as it has now become tradition that the leavers don full fancy dress costume to do battle with the U17 XV. It was a keenly contested game and as always played in good spirit and the leavers were justified winners. The U17 also travelled to the annual Gary Clarke

memorial tournament, hosted by Lurgan RFC, and performed admirably against Lurgan College, Portadown College and Friends' School, all of whom field the full Under 18 1st XV.

In addition to those detailed earlier, the following players also represented the 1st XV during the season: Stuart Totten, Matthew McCarter, Scott Buchannon, Robbie Little, Clyde Scott. Motiejus Cizauskas, Mathew Jameson, Corin McCluskey, Paddy Maguinness, David Ogle, Paddy McNeill, and Roger Russell.

The 1st XV playing record was:
Played 20, Won 5, Lost 15.
Points for 166, Points against 383



Top points scorers:

Points	Tries	Penalties	Conversions	Drop Goal	Total
Ben Thompson	2	2	6	-	28
Timmy Beattie	5	-	-	-	25
Jordan Mount	4	-	-	-	20
John Wilson	3	-	-	-	15
Ben Russell	3	-	-	-	15



2nd XV

The 2nd XV had a successful and enjoyable season with some fine individual performances and a few good team wins along the way. They began slowly however with a 24-17 loss to Armagh Royal. This was followed by 39-0 and 31-0 losses to Sullivan Upper and Omagh Academy respectively and then a 5-22 loss to Portora Royal. The first win of the season was an excellent 29-20 win over Lurgan College and this was followed by an even better 7-3 win over Bangor Grammar, where the team found their true form. A 17-49 loss to Coleraine Grammar proceeded a disappointing day at Strabane in the first round of the 2nd XV Cup. Here despite leading for most of the game, the 2nd XV conspired to give Strabane the final try and conversion to claim a 20-19 victory. Tries from Chrissy

Patterson, Tom Flanagan and Corin McCluskey, plus two conversions by Flanagan were not enough to prevent Strabane taking the win.

This was followed by a 30-12 loss in a friendly against Grosvenor before Christmas but then came our best performance of the year with a 17-5 victory over Foyle College in the 2nd XV Plate. A first half try from Centre Jamie Ewing was followed up by two tries from full back Roger Russell and Tom Flanagan converted the middle score to give the team much needed boost going into the Christmas holidays. That fine performance was backed up by a 31-17 win against Dungannon Royal and an emphatic 34-5 win over Rainey Endowed. The New Year saw the team renew their Plate campaign with a

narrow but still disappointing loss away to Armagh Royal, 13-18.

At the End of Season Awards Ceremony, Niall McCarter received the Captains' Award, with Alex Mitchell winning the Most Improved Player award and James Moore deservedly won the Player of the Year award.

All the players would like to thank the coaching staff who took so much time with them this year, but especially Mr Andrew Craig and Mr Michael Ross for all their efforts on Saturdays throughout the season. Just a handful of Upper Sixth appeared regularly in the squad so this is certainly a team for the future, with all of the players hoping to push on to the 1st XV next season.



3rd XV

The 3rd XV had a truncated season, playing just three matches. At the beginning of the year they lost 47-12 to Armagh Royal, with tries from Adam McCullagh and Roger Russell and a conversion from Russell. In the 3rd XV cup they played RBAI 5th XV and in an extremely tight game they lost 22-23.

Tries were scored by Matthew McCarter, Paddy MaGuinness, Jamie Ewing and Chris Patterson and Mathew Jameson landed a conversion. In the first round of the Plate they lost 36-5 away to Dalriada, with a try coming from prop forward Clyde Scott.

At the End of Season Awards Ceremony Mathew Jameson was presented with the Captains' award, Patrick McNeill received the Player of the Year trophy and Ryan Armstrong won the Most Improved Player award. The players would like to thank all of their coaches who helped out over the course of the season.

Medallion XV

Jake Beattie (Captain)



The Medallion XV started off 2015-2016 with two tough defeats by Armagh Royal and Sullivan Upper, with both teams beating us by over 30 points. We were determined to improve but we knew we would have to train hard. Our first win of the season was against Lurgan College who were defeated 36-12. Next we faced Bangor Grammar and despite a good team performance with two tries from Andrew Denver, we were defeated. We then went on to play Coleraine Grammar School, Belfast High School, Wellington College and Grosvenor and due to four good team performances and excellent individual performances from Andrew Denver and Robert Mathers, we came home victorious in all four games. The Medallion Shield was looming, however we faced two big opponents, BRA and Dungannon and despite giving our best efforts we were defeated in both games, only scoring two tries in the two games.

In the first round of the Medallion Shield we faced Antrim Grammar. We knew going into the game that in order to win we were going to have to give it our all. We came out victorious, winning 27-0 with a hat trick from Robert Mathers and two

tries from Elliott McCormick and Harry Campbell. Our second game in the Medallion Shield was in Enniskillen against Portora Royal School and despite being beaten by them earlier in the season, we held them to a 3-3 draw and had a home replay. This time Portora were in Banbridge and we had the home advantage. Despite it being an extremely tight match for most of the game, we won 22-7 with tries from Andrew Denver, Robert Mathers, Jordan Poots and Adam Hanna. We were now into the 3rd round and our opponents were Coleraine Grammar, who we had defeated earlier in the year. Coleraine had a very strong team; they defeated us heavily and knocked us out of the Medallion Shield. We then faced Sullivan Upper in the Plate, however team morale was still low and we suffered a heavy defeat, which ended our chances of winning any competitions.

Our last match of the season was against our biggest rivals, Dromore High School. The whole match was extremely tight, however we made a few breaks that we made full advantage of and won 17-5. This was a great way to end a very enjoyable season.

At the End of Season Awards Ceremony, Andrew Denver was awarded the Player of the Year trophy and Hugo Bertholon was awarded the Most Improved trophy.

On behalf of the Medallion team I would like to thank Mr Baxter and Kallan Martin for all the time and effort they put in this season, which helped us improve dramatically as a rugby team.



U14 Rugby

Adam Hanna (Captain)



Our third rugby season started mid-September with two wins out of three. Our first match was against Royal School Armagh, a strong side and we lost the game 29-0. We then had the long journey to Omagh Academy for our second game of the season. We clinched the victory from being 0-5 down for most of the game but two well worked tries both scored by Peter Coughlin and a conversion by Charlie Hillis won us the game in the final 15 minutes, 12-5.

Another successful win was our next game against Clounagh, 31-7, which consisted of two tries from Adam Hanna, one from Darragh Crozier, one from Korey Knox and three conversions from Harry Patterson. Unfortunately after this match, we had a poor run of form.

We faced a formidable Portora side, suffering a heavy defeat 36-0. A loss to

Bangor Grammar 49-10 followed even with a try from Peter Coughlin and Niall Thompson. Our next match against Carrick Grammar, a tough opponent, had improved and strengthened and this told in the final score of 25-0 to Carrick. Another team, Belfast High School, that in our previous season we had beaten in the final minutes had also improved and this told in our defeat of 33-15 despite two tries from Adam Hanna and one from Peter Coughlin. Further defeats followed against Grosvenor and Royal School, Dungannon.

The return leg against Omagh Academy was a good game but we couldn't complete a double win and lost 29-5. Our poor run of form came to an end with a great win over a Wallace High School select XV 26-7, with tries from Adam Brown, Cameron Martin, Heynes Brown, Conor Hodgett and three conversions by Charlie Hillis.

Our season finished poorly by losing to Friends' school 39-5 (with a try from Adam Hanna) and in our rival game against Dromore High School in the Masters Shield, we lost 26-0.

Overall while some results did not go our way, we had a very enjoyable season and we will be ready for next year and our Medallion Shield campaign. A word of congratulations must also go to Captain Adam Hanna who, on the strength of his good performances this season, was selected for the Ulster U16 summer training camps. Also, at the End of Season Award Ceremony Peter Coughlin was named Player of the Year and Oliver Gordon was named Most Improved.

The U14 team would like to thank Mr Erskine and Mr O'Shaughnessy for their help and coaching throughout this past season.

U13 XV

Captain: Niall Malcolmson

The U13 teams started the year with mixed results: the A-team drawing 5-5 with Armagh Royal, a well drilled side, with the try coming from Patrick Adams and the B-team losing 34-0 against a stronger, more experienced Armagh side. The A-team then faced a Sullivan Upper side. A try from Patrick Adams, followed by a conversion from Ross Graham made up the score with a 7-22 defeat. They then went on to defeat Clounagh 31-24 with two tries from Niall Malcolmson (c) and another two from Jake Houston and Matthew Hutchinson adding the fifth, two conversions coming from Ross Graham and Harry Patterson adding another conversion. Omagh was their next opposition, which resulted in a 15-7 success and was a confidence booster for the side, with tries from Jake Houston, Matthew Hutchinson and Louis O'Neill tallying up the scoreline. They faced a very tough Portora Royal side, the final whistle went with a big loss against the boys in black and red. There was another tight match for the boys again going down 26-22 to Bangor Grammar. Jake Houston had an outstanding match scoring a hat-trick of tries, Jason Fitzsimmons adding the fourth and Ross Graham slotting a conversion.

After Halloween a mixed side of U13s and U14s went down to Dublin to play CUS with the scoreline coming out in a 13-12 loss. A match against a tough Coleraine side didn't go in our favour losing out 26-14 with a try from Patrick Adams, another try and two conversions from Ross Graham. We progressed into another match this time against Carrick, we had tries from Jake Houston, Ben Russell and Patrick Adams and a conversion by Harry Patterson but it still wasn't enough against a strong Carrick side with a defeat of 21-17. We then faced a Belfast High team taking the win of 30-5 running in six unconverted tries, two a piece coming from Jake Houston and Matthew Hutchinson, Patrick Adams and Ross Graham both touched down for a score each. Next up we faced Mr McLoughlin's previous school Grosvenor, overwhelming them with a 50-7 score line with team effort tries coming from Louis O'Neill, Niall



Malcolmson(c), Harry Paterson, Matthew Hutchinson, Ross Graham, Scott Graham, Patrick Adams and Ben Russell. Ross Graham added five conversions to make the final tally. Dungannon levelled up the score at the end of a game played in very tough conditions with the score line finishing up at a 5-5 draw. B.R.A made the journey down to B.A. on a bitterly cold snowy Saturday morning setting the bench marker and throwing 21 points against us as we narrowly lost out 21-17 with tries from Ben Russell, Dovydas Liutvinas and Marc Murphy and a conversion from Ross Graham.

After the Christmas break we travelled to Down High to put up a very strong 1st half throwing 19 points at the opposition, but in the 2nd half they came out the stronger side firing 21 points back at us. The final result was a 21-19 defeat with lots of disappointment in the Banbridge side; the tries came from Jake Houston, Patrick Adams and Ross Graham, with two conversions coming from Ross Graham. We played Omagh in a mid-week fixture coming out 12-0 winners, with tries from Ross Graham and Marc Murphy and a conversion from Ross Graham. Wallace

were the next side we faced and with a lot of tired bodies from the mid-week Omagh fixture, we were defeated 12-5 with the try coming from Patrick Adams. We faced Armagh Royal again hoping to come home with the win but it was like we didn't arrive on the day, losing out 24-7 to a strong well-drilled opposition. Louis O'Neill scored the try and Ross Graham added the conversion. Friends were the next opposition and we came out with the win of 43-7 and another hat trick for Jake Houston, with one a-piece for Niall Malcolmson(c), Ross Graham, Scott Graham and Patrick Adams and four conversions from Ross Graham.

We played our final game against Dromore High School (this was the big one) and the final result was a draw of 5-5 with the try from Patrick Adams. All in all it was an enjoyable season and we won the Team of the Year trophy at the End of Season Awards Ceremony. Top try scorer: Jake Houston, Player of the year: Ben Russell, Most Improved: Ross Graham.

The team would also like to thank Mr Beacom and Stefan Greenberg for all their coaching throughout the year.

Under 12 A & B Report

The Under 12 A and B teams had successful first seasons as Banbridge Academy teams. With so many of the players new to rugby it took a while to get the matches started, but with big numbers attending all training sessions we were able to field two full 15 aside teams.

Our season began against local rivals Dromore High School, where in three 10-a-side matches we drew 10-10 in the A game with tries from Ben Bradshaw and Jamie Gibson, we won the B game 50-0 and lost the C game 20-35. Our next matches were against Friends' School where we won the A game 45-10, the B game 30-5 and the C game 35-10. Our first 15-a-side matches followed against Killicomaine, where the A team lost 10-17 with tries from Will Russell and Marcus McNeill and the B team lost 5-12 with a try from Dylan McCauley.

After Christmas we were soon back in action, this time against Down High School. The A team drew 12-12 with tries from Matthew Daly and Dylan Stewart and a conversion from Will Russell, while the B team lost 10-14 with two tries from Jack Boyce. Next was a series of four matches against Banbridge Rugby Club, where the combined scores were 35-15 to the Academy but more importantly we gained great experience against a very useful Banbridge RFC team. Next we played Armagh Royal with the A team winning 10-0, with tries from Daniel Lappin and Ben Bradshaw, while our B team lost 10-20 with tries from Dylan McCauley and Jason Ferguson. Our final full match of the season was a 12-12 draw with rivals Dromore High School in the Master Shield, with tries from Finley Wright and Matthew Daly.

The final event of the season was the Down High Tournament where we were good enough to win the subsidiary 'Trophy' competition. We lost 0-5 in our first match against Down High but we beat Armagh Royal 7-5 in our semi and defeated Regent House 39-0 in the Trophy final. Proud captain Ben



Bradshaw was delighted to lift the trophy and bring home this group of players' first bit of silverware as a Banbridge Academy team.

At the End of Season Rugby Awards Ben Bradshaw, Marcus McNeill, Jamie Gibson and Alexander Innocenzi were voted the A team players of the year

and Jack Boyce and Joel Good were voted the B team players of the year.

The team would like to thank all of the staff who worked with them this year, but especially Stevie Reddick and Brian O'Shaughnessy who came in as external coaches to help every Monday, Wednesday and match day.

Rugby Awards Ceremony



Current Ulster A player and Banbridge Academy former pupil Jonathan Simpson, was the guest of honour at this season's Rugby Awards ceremony. Simpson, a hard working Prop forward, is currently a fully contracted Ulster player and has made several important appearances for the Ulster A team this year in the British and Irish Cup. While at the Academy he represented both Ulster and Ireland Schools, while playing for the school's 1st XV. He now plays his club rugby with Ballynahinch in Division 1A of the All Ireland League.

Simpson presented trophies to captains, players of the year and most improved players and also took the chance to say a few words of encouragement to the boys. He commended the players on their hard work throughout the season and congratulated them on another fine year in terms of results and performances. He took a particular moment to congratulate the 1st XV on winning the Schools' Trophy so convincingly against Belfast High School back in February. He also commented on the commitment of the coaching staff, namely the school staff of Brian Leslie, Tim Baxter, Jonny Erskine and Chris Beacom along with the outside coaches Roy Stevenson, Andrew Craig, Brian O'Shaughnessy, Michael Ross,

Kallan Martin, Stuart Russell, Matthew Scott, Stevie Reddick, Ryan Tate, Stefan Greenburg and Mike Bentley and paid tribute to their hard work in coaching, refereeing and putting together teams.

2015-16 was another successful season for the Academy rugby family in many ways. Firstly, in terms of playing numbers with six teams playing each Saturday and two Under 12 teams playing each Friday. Secondly, it was successful in terms of silverware with the 1st XV winning the Schools' Trophy and The U12 XV winning the Down High School Trophy.

A full breakdown of the individual award winners is below:

U12 'A' XV - Won Down High Trophy
 Player of Year: Marcus McNeill
 Ben Bradshaw
 Jamie Gibson
 Alexander Innocenzi

U12 'B' XV
 Player of Year: Joel Good
 Jack Boyce

U13 'A' XV
 Captain: Niall Malcolmson
 Player of Year: Ben Russell
 Most Improved: Ross Graham

U14 'A' XV

Captain: Adam Hanna
 Player of Year: Peter Coughlin
 Most Improved: Oliver Gordon

Medallion XV

Captain: Jake Beattie
 Player of Year: Andrew Denver
 Most Improved: Hugo Bertholon

3rd XV

Captain: Mathew Jameson
 Player of Year: Patrick McNeill
 Most Improved: Ryan Armstrong

2nd XV

Captain: Matthew McCarter
 Player of Year: James Moore
 Most Improved: Alex Mitchell

1st XV - Winners Schools' Trophy

Captain; Michael McGaffin
 Top Try Scorer: Timmy Beattie
 Overall P.O.Y.: Ross Cartmill
 U6 P.O.Y.: Ben Russell
 L6 P.O.Y.: Ross Cartmill
 Yr 12 P.O.Y.: Timmy Beattie
 Most Improved; Thomas Russell
 Clubman: Jack Macauley

Team of the Year

U13 XV – playing record