It was a very hard-fought encounter between two sides who were committed to intense and fluent attacking rugby. A strong and vocal Omagh support were witness to a Sunday’s Well team who more than matched their side and came agonisingly short of claiming victory from a very tough away encounter.

At the half-way phase; it leads things very tight in the table. The ‘Well are only three points off Omagh in fourth and could overtake them with the return leg in January. Conversely; a great win by Midleton has also seen the bottom team close in; with the ‘Well five points clear of them. There is little separating 3rd to 10th with Skerries and Enniscorthy establishing a cushion in the battle for the automatic promotion spot at the top. It is still all to play for and with five home games from nine the ‘Well will be pushing hard to climb the table.

For those who made the long trip North; they were witness to an excellent spectacle and a strong performance by the ‘well. They elected to play into the wind in the first-half and had to absorb plenty of pressure. It was a brisk day; with a heavy shower before the match but the grass pitch was in pristine condition and suited both sides’ attacking style.

Omagh looked to spread the ball and run hard but some excellent tackling; led by Captain Eoin Geary kept them at bay. Conor O’Brien and John Barry were also immense in defence and they won some crucial turnovers at the breakdown. Still the strong wind made it difficult to relieve the pressure while Omagh regularly utilised it to pin the ‘Well back deep.

While it looked like Omagh were most threatening from open-play; it was the set-piece that laid the platform for the try. While the ‘Well were strong on the scrum and applied pressure on the put-in for Omagh; their Number Eight Matthew Clyde regularly was able to control possession. With a scrum close in he made a strong drive for the line and his pack followed up with some powerful carries before hooker Adam Pollock touched down to open the scoring.

After the concession of the try; the ‘Well’s attack began to come to the fore. Billy Pope controlled the flow of the attacks. He ensured that runners onto the ball were coming at pace and able to hammer over the gain-line while some soft-hands and excellent support lines saw some excellent off-loads.

Joshua Barnes and O’Brien were regularly powering through with Graeme Lawlor getting through an immense amount of work and making hard metres. At one stage; they were looking to exit from their own half on the left-hand side. After several big carries they were up in the Twenty-Two on the opposite side of the pitch with Brian Derham racing to finish off a magnificent move. His own touch-line conversion bounced off the post.

The ‘Well continued to press and with a penalty bought play up to just outside the 22. O’Brien secured the line-out and a great maul bought them within metres of the line. They had a penalty advantage and after several carries by the men up front; Omagh had to commit a lot of players to the tight and Pope spread the ball out with Josh Featherstone breaking through for the try. Derham’s conversion gave his side a 12-5 lead at the break.

Omagh came out with renewed vigour in the second-half and dominated possession and territory. The ‘Well had one chance to relieve the pressure but some indiscipline allowed Omagh return up the field immediately. After almost half an hour of pressure with some determined and vigorous defending; Omagh eventually break through with Scott Barr touching down and Scott Elliott converting.

In the final ten minutes it was all Sunday’s Well. They were camped inside the Twenty-Two, but the huge defensive effort had taken a lot out of them. After applying pressure under the posts, it was eventually out wide where a penalty was awarded and Derham’s difficult effort just kept narrowly wide of the near-post.

**Scorers: Omagh**: A Pollock, S Barr tries; S Elliott con.

**Sunday’s Well:** B Derham try, con; J Featherstone try.

**Omagh:** K Beattie; S Barr, D KAne, L Hanson, R Mitchell; S Elliott, S McCain; R Hemphill, A Pollock, E McKeown; R Sproule, M Edgar; J Catterson, A Longwell (c), M Clyde. **Replacements:** M Smyth, J Blair, J Sproule, M Eccles, A Beckett.

**Sunday’s Well:** B Derham; J Kiernan, E Geary (c), C Jouve, R O’Keeffe; J Featherstone, B Pope; I Murphy, J Barry, E O’Connell; J BArnes, S Desmond; G Lawlor, C O’Brien, C Kelliher. **Replacements:** G O’Sullivan, M Moynihan, J Barrett, D Lacey, W Power.

**Referee:** G Sheridan (IRFU)