Skerries 13, Sunday’s Well 3.

It was another tough and tight tussle against high-flying Skerries; but unfortunately the result went the same was as the previous encounter in Irish Independent Park back in December. The North Dublin side were just that bit more clinical closer to the line. The result sees them and Enniscorthy pulling further away at the top of Division 2C of the Energia All Ireland League.

The result sees the ‘Well slip from 4th to 6th; but given the tightness of the Division there is still plenty to play for with relegation and promotion play-offs still up for grabs by almost every other team in the League. The ‘Well again proved their ability to match any one and the commitment and determination in the squad means they have a capability to get on a run.

The ‘Well took an early lead through a Brian Derham penalty. The scrum was getting on top with Ian Murphy and Evan O’Connell leading from the front while also carrying strongly around the field. Cyprien Jouve was lively all over the field making a lot of hard metres while outside in the backs; Ryan Buckley was regularly going on rampaging runs and bursting through the opposition defensive line.

Skerries defended doggedly and were able to keep any pressure away from their Twenty-Two in the first-half. While having less of the possession; they were always a threat in broken play and on one turnover; they quickly shifted the ball to the blindside where there was space for Kevin McGrath to burst down the field and touch-down in the corner.

Skerries held the 5-3 advantage at the break and made a strong start to the second half. The ‘Well were hampered with the loss of their captain Eoin Geary during that period. McGrath initiated another attack for Skerries that had them camped on the line but after a frantic defensive effort; they settled for three points from the boot of Peter O’Loghlen.

Skerries looked to be getting on top but a great intervention by Robert O’Keeffe prevented another scoring opportunity and shifted the momentum of the game. Having claimed the ball back he went on the front foot with a great powerful run into the opposing half and setting up a great attack.

The ‘Well built on this attack and another counter involving James Kiernan and O’Keeffe had Skerries on the back-foot. Having got up to the 22; a clever kick by Derham towards the goal-line on the left saw several ‘Well players chasing the ball down with one Skerries player covering. The ‘Well got hands but an attempt to offload in the tackle saw the ball go forward.

There were further opportunities; but all too often the final pass that would have men into space just didn’t happen. Having piled on the pressure for 20 minutes and pinning Skerries on their own line; the home side got a serious of marginal calls to work the ball up field.

From a rolling maul in the 22; they got a strong shove but the ball suddenly came lose and bounced over the line. Ross McAuley pounced on it to touch-down and while to most it was unclear how the ball came loose; the officials after a long consultation adjudged that the ‘Well had won possession and palmed the ball backwards; with McAuley coming in from an onside possession.

**Scorers: Skerries:** K McGrath, R McAuley tries; P O’Loghlen con.

**Sunday’s Well:** B Derham pen.

**Skerries:** L Jones; M Oliver, K McGrath (c), D Lowndes, C Lennox; P O’Loghlen, E Carron; Cormac Marrey, K Leonard, T Scuffil; P Fay-Watt, T Mulvany; M Turvey, B Jenkinson, R McAuley. **Replacements:** Conn Marrey, J Sherwin, R Halligan, R woods, O McKey.

**Sunday’s Well:** J Kiernan; R O’Keeffe, B Derham, R Buckley, J Ruiz-Herrera; B Pope, E Geary (c); I Murphy, G O’Sullivan, E O’Connell; J Barness, J Gardiner; S Desmond, C Jouve, C O’Brien. **Replacements:** J Downey, C Kelliher, P Arigho, J Barrett, N O’Donoghue.

**Referee:** R Watson (IRFU)