



## **LANCASHIRE COUNTY RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION**

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Lancashire U20s set off in the warm spring sunshine of a fine Sunday morning for their Jason Leonard U20 County Shield Quarter Final away against Warwickshire at Broadstreet RFC determined to put their last performance against Cheshire firmly out of the way.

Buoyed with the return of some key players the squad took the Coach trip down the M6 in their stride. A good warm-up followed by a rousing talk from Coaches Martin Scott and Neil Ryan saw the Red Rose boys eager to take the game to their hosts.

A few early chances and unforced errors littered the opening quarter of an hour until Warwickshire were caught offside at the ruck and James Ratcliffe (Firwood Waterloo) sent the resultant penalty thru the posts for a lead Lancashire were not going to concede. Barely 50 seconds later swift hands in the Lancashire Backline allowed Full Back Tom Carleton (Fylde) to glide into the line to score his and Lancashire's first try of the day, Ratcliffe added the extra two. Seven minutes later the Pack in particular dominant mode in the Lineout saw Nick Ashcroft (Fylde) catch the ball and the subsequent drive had Lancashire Skipper and Hooker Ben Gregory (Fylde) at the back to touch down for the final score of the half.

Half-time Warwickshire 0 Lancashire 15.

Six minutes into the 2<sup>nd</sup> Half, Connor Wilkinson (Fylde) showed his dance moves again stepping the defensive cover before finding Carleton who's run from deep was too good for the would be tacklers and Ratcliffe made sure the conversion landed. The warm weather seemed to affect the home side more and three minutes later a dropped ball on the Lancashire 22 allowed Carleton to scoop it up and race 70 metres unopposed, conversion good and Lancashire were beginning to head out of sight with a 29-0 lead.

Warwickshire had their best period of the game on the hour mark and eventually after a series of Scrums and Lineouts in the Lancashire 22 they broke the cover defence to score a converted try. However Lancashire re-asserted their grip on the game with some good driving carries by Ashcroft, George Blackwell (Fylde) and Elliot Horner (Myerscough) allowing Wilkinson again the chance to cut the defence up and swift hands found Carleton in again for his fourth try. The conversion was knocked over by Ratcliffe and Lancashire now led 36-7.

Lancashire made several chances and within 4 minutes of coming on replacement Prop John Blanchard (Myerscough) ran a strong line on the shoulder of Wilkinson and crashed over for the try with Ratcliffe making the



scoreboard continued to click over. The final stages played out in the Warwickshire 22 and with a minute to go replacement Hooker Tom Egerton (Sale FC) touched down for the final points of the game.

Final score Warwickshire 7 Lancashire 48

A very impressive and improved performance from Lancashire and now they face Cheshire once more in a North West rugby showdown Semi-Final on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> April, venue to be advised.