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Daily Mail/RBS U18 Cup: Whitgift out down a marker with superb win over St Benedict's

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Whitgift sounded out another ominous warning in the Daily Mail RBS U18 Cup when they put St Benedict's, Ealing firmly in their place at Perivale to reach the quarter-finals.

The Croydon school won 27-10 in this eagerly anticipated battle for bragging rights in the capital and were superior in all departments.

They had too much power and passion up front and a frightening amount of pace and flair in their inter-changing backs.



It does help having three England U18 internationals - a giant of a lock in George Merrick plus Elliot Daly and Marland Yarde in the centre - but the whole team worked for each other like trojans whether in defence or attack and Bennies enjoyed neither time nor space to play their usual game.

The home side fought gamely to establish a toe-hold but struggled to live off poor scraps of possession and the game was lost by the time they put the Whitgift line under pressure late in the second half and scored a try through fly half Ross McIntosh.

To put the win in perspective, Bennies had not lost since early September on the back of some dynamic, expansive rugby and, just before Christmas, had beaten John Fisher, the only team to get the better of Whitgift this season.

Bennies coach Nick Guise admitted: 'They were awesome and sometimes you have to hold your hands up and admit you were beaten by a better side. It was the first time we had been

dominated at the set-piece and they did to us what we have been doing to other sides all season.'

Whitgift's game plan was simple: be on the front foot whether in attack or defence and they were given the perfect start after 75 seconds when James Canty came in off his wing to take an inside pass from fly half Rob White just inside his half and rip through the Bennies' midfield before supplying the scoring pass to Daly.

Bennies were clearly rattled and it was no surprise when Whitgift went further ahead after 14 minutes with a peach of a try.

Full back Chris Crane, safe as houses all match, collected a high ball on halfway and it then passed through six pairs of hands before Yarde managed to pop up a pass as he was tackled to giant winger Lawrence Okoye.

There was no stopping Whitgift's answer to Jonah Lomu and Daly converted from in front of the posts.

More pressure led to Daly stretching the lead to 15-0 and although McIntosh replied in kind to give Bennies a lift, Whitgift were effectively home and dry four minutes after half time. They stole another line-out on the '22' and White's long pass put Daly through an inviting gap, before Yarde finished off the move in the corner. Daly made the score 22-3 with a superb touchline conversion.

Bennies refused to give up the ghost and after scrum half Jonah Holmes was stopped inches short, McIntosh's little show and go gave him the space to run in from 10 metres, a try he converted with a quick drop kick.

The home crowd was in full voice for the first time but Whitgift had the last word when White's arcing run took him down the touchline where he was tackled just short but, as always, there was support and Harry Williams drove over for their fourth try.

They now play Bishop's Stortford High School at home in the quarters.

DAILY MAIL RBS U18 CUP - Quarter-finals: Skinners v RGS Newcastle; Stowe v Warwick; RGS High Wycombe v Barnard Castle or QEGS Wakefield; Whitgift v Bishop's Stortford HS.

Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sport/rugbyunion/article-1247485/Daily-Mail-RBS-U18-Cup-Whitgift-marker-superb-win-St-Benedicts.html###ixzz0eH3YFCU2>