

Snow across the Capital which wiped out a series of fixtures at the weekend had made the Suttonians venue unplayable but the hard working staff some of whom were on call as early as 8am on Friday morning made this Colleges game an overwhelming success.

Played on a terrific pitch, the North County venue did the fingingal village proud and in credit to both teams, the rugby on offer provided good entertainment for those brave enough to endure the elements.

This was the first encounter between the two sides and the French went into the game with a good record having lost just the one of their four fixtures in 2008. On the night Irish Colleges succumbed to a mobile French team who twice struck with tries in the left corner in each half. Nonetheless there were plenty of encouraging displays none more so than that of front row Mike Storey who drove the Irish on with some terrific drives.

The two teams had early chances on goal with former Irish Schools outhalf, Brian Collins, unable to capitalise on an early French miss when pulling a penalty just wide of the posts.

But shortly afterwards the Boyne man sent over a great drop goal after the French had surrendered possession off a line out inside their own 22.

But the French then replied with a drop goal of their own from outhalf, Mathie Belie midway through the half.

The Irish then conceded a penalty in front of the posts when an Irish forward ventured offside as he attempted to charge down an attempted drop goal from the Belie,

And although the CSRU Toulouse stand-off duly was unsuccessful with his effort, he made no mistake on 26 minutes to put the French in front for the first time.

And then just short of the half hour, a stunning move from right to left saw Clement Imbert release Quentin Valencon outside. And despite Collins best efforts to put him in touch, Valencon prevailed to squeeze over in the corner.

With Belie unsuccessful with the conversion, the French went in at half-time 11-3 up but the Irish enjoyed a good spell in the third quarter with John Downey very prominent in the loose.

But the home side then conceded a second try when replacement wing Matthieu Pallares ran on to a diagonal ball to make the left hand corner with Belie making the difficult conversion from inside the touchline in what proved to be the final score of the game.

Scorers

Ireland: B Collins drop goal

France: Q Valencon, M Pallars try each, M Belle pen, drop goal, con

Irish Colleges: P Budina, J Devitt, L Kavanagh, K Lynch, D Fanning, B Collins, S Treacy, N Simpson, C Culleton, M Storey, B Moroney, R Copeland, John Dever, J

Downey, A Dunlop

Subs used: S Snell, A Ferguson, E Nihill, A Kerr, S Joyce, M Geraghy, C Morrin

French Universities: K Pautric, S Ternisien, Q Valenion, P Bonneford, C Imbert, M Belle, L Babarthe, C Ric, B Denoyelle, G Fabro, J B Roidot, A Louchard, S Nicola, B Leonte, M Petitehange

Subs M Pallares, A Ciacobazzi, C Denoyelle, R Bonfils, B Zanon, L C Harlon,

Referee: D Wilkinson (A.R.L.B)