**Hope fall to first defeat of the season at Uni of Liverpool**

Hope Men’s Rugby Union succumbed to their first loss of the campaign with a disappointing 29-17 loss at city rivals University of Liverpool.

The hosts had the lion’s share of an encounter littered with a combination of errors and penalties, running four tries, whilst scores from Hope’s Jack Kirk and Michael Browne proved to be in vain at Wyncote.

In a scrappy first half, UoL opened the scoring on 7 minutes, going over from close range after a sustained period of pressure in the visitor’s 22 as they surrendered possession from kick off. The response was instant as Hope came up with a score of their own through Jack Kirk’s delightful solo effort down the right edge.

The sides then traded tries as the first half went on. The home side regained the lead as they barged over from a maul inside Hope’s 10. Michael Browne replied for the visitors before UoL went over with an effort straight from a kick return inside Hope’s half, handing them a 19-14 lead going into the break.

The second period began much as the first. Handling errors aplenty, both sides failed to gain a grip of the game, Hope reduced the deficit through Ollie Smith’s penalty goal.

However, the visitors never managed to go up a gear from there, UoL went on to take control courtesy of a close range try resulting from a charge down inside Hope’s 22 once more. The hosts added gloss to the score line in the closing stages with a further 3 points from a pot shot at goal after winning a penalty deep inside Hope’s half.

Hope remain top despite losing their 100% record, whilst the hosts made it 5 straight wins and remain 2nd with a game in hand over Hope and fellow Merseyside outfit Liverpool John Moores in 1st and 2nd respectively.

Liverpool Hope player/coach Joe O’Rourke

“It was simply a bad day at the office for us. The first we’ve had thus far but that’s a testament to the season we’ve had up to now. The basics just didn’t come off for us today and we’ve a few key players to come back. We need to make sure we get back to the level we’ve been at all season as we move on to next week”.