

# Rugby – Watsonians v Selkirk, RBS National League




Photo and report – John Preece

A bright, but breezy, Saturday saw the Borders men from Selkirk make the trip up to Myreside to play Watsonians in the latest round of the RBS National League. With Watsonians on a roll after four consecutive wins, it wasn't going to be easy for the visitors.

And so it proved. Watsonians made a fine start and the home side had the visitors on the back foot from their kick off. Winning ball from a first minute lineout, the hosts drove upfield using both forwards and backs to progress. Selkirk held firm and eventually forced a kick which the visitors 15 put out near the centre line. Winning their lineout, again Watsonians drove up and into the Selkirk 22, with the centres combining to be stopped just short of the line. The forwards secured possession and sent the ball right, leaving No. 6, Niall Dennis to crash through in the corner. With Brian Walls nailing a difficult kick, it was 7-0 to the Myreside men.

Less than ten minutes later it was the turn of Selkirk to cross the line. Keeping hold of the ball, again it was through the forwards that progress was made, leaving No. 9 Gavin Craig to pick up the ball from the remains of a ruck and dive over. He missed his conversion, though to take the score to 7-5.

 A bit of shared possession from the kick off saw the game confined to the middle of the pitch until the host's backs got the ball. A missed tackle left the way fairly clear to the line and a swift pass out to full-back, Rory Steele left him with an easy run in under the posts. Kick completed, score 14-5.

The rest of the half was fairly evenly matched. Selkirk came closest to scoring, only being held out a few metres from the line, but the half finished with no further scoring. 14-5 to Watsonians.

The second half was a different affair altogether, however, with Watsonians outscoring their opponents four tries to two. For most of the opening ten minutes, Selkirk barely saw the ball and it took this time for the hosts to open the second-half score card. With the forwards, again, playing their part, Mark Rennie got hands on the ball out on the right, and with a few of his mates in tow, drove Selkirk back over their line to score 'Sonians third try. Walls missed the kick to leave the score at 19-5. They nearly did the same again less than ten minutes later. Selkirk held them up short and cleared the ball to the side-line. Winning the lineout, the home side forwards developed a rolling maul and rolled up to and over the line, sub, Marcus Heather, being the man to touch down. Walls missed again – it was very breezy – and Watsonians were looking good for the win at 24-5.

Selkirk didn't quite see it that way, and while Watsonians were still patting themselves on the back, their forwards pulled a try back under the posts. Craig converted this time around to bring the visitor's points tally up to 12.

From the kick-off, the hosts gathered the ball and they were off again. Rolling maul formed, they drove the away side back into their 22. Five metres out and a slight handling error handed the ball to Selkirk. A short pass to Craig and all the scrum-half had to do was clear the ball up the pitch. Unfortunately he cleared the ball straight into a charging Chris Scott, who had nothing better to do, but follow the rebound into the goal area and fall on the ball to score the fifth home side try. Again the wind decided the fate of the kick and Watsonians were now 29-12 in the lead.

At this point, the Selkirk captain choose the moment to exhort

his team with the revelation that “If they didn’t get their \*\*\*\*\* in gear, it could become embarrassing!”

How true. There appeared to be nothing stopping Watsonians now and mere, what seemed to be, seconds later they were at it again. This time the sequence went – kick off, forwards collect, penalty, lineout win, forwards drive, try, celebrate. And almost as quickly as that too. This time the scorer was, eventual Man-of-the-Match, No. 3, Riann Basson (pictured) and again the kick went wide. 34-12 to ‘Sonians.

The way Selkirk picked up their game in the final ten minutes of play must have had their coach moved to wonder where it came from, and, possibly, say a few words after the game regarding the step-up in effort. The home side played most of this time behind their own five metre line and Selkirk hammered away, winning a couple of penalties, to eventually cross the line two minutes from time. With the day proving a nightmare for kickers – only three getting through out of around a dozen – the final score rested at 34-19 to Watsonians.

So a nine try thriller at Myreside must have left Selkirk scratching their heads and the rest of the division looking over their shoulders at a team on the move, with five, consecutive, wins out of six matches and lying second to Glasgow Hawks in the table. Premiership Rugby at Myreside next season? Maybe too early yet.

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