

Rugby – Edinburgh Academy v Stewarts-Melville

Accies retain their Premiership status at Hawthornden's Premiership play-off match



Despite a stiff wind, Edinburgh Academy and Stewarts-Melville played out an exciting match at Bonnyrigg on Saturday with the final place in the RBS Premiership as the prize.

Accies had the majority of the early possession and, with just over 10 minutes played, crossed the line for the first touch down. Unfortunately, No. 10 Alex Blair, had made a 'double movement' reaching for the line and a penalty was awarded to Stew-Mel, allowing the 'visitors', to clear. However, it wasn't too long before Accies were pounding on the door of Stew-Mel's defence once more and, this time, the try stood. Quick ball through the hands put No 12, Iain Berthinussen, outside his opposing centre and across the line for the opening score. The wind drifted Blair's kick wide, but the score was 5-0 to Accies.

The wind had played against Stew-Mel early on with a couple of clearing kicks clearing Accies dead ball line, but once they got in their stride, they advanced upfield and put Accies under some pressure. A powerful run by Mike Hanning put the ball in the hands of Scott Brewster and in the ensuing ruck, Stew-Mel were awarded a penalty, which No 10, Nick McCashin knocked over to bring the scoreline up to 5-3.

For the next ten minutes, or so, the match swung back and forth, with Stew-Mel coming closest to their opponents line and putting them under some pressure. This period of play ended when another ruck infringement gave McCashin a second pot at goal. Kick over, score 6-5 to Stew-Mel. Accies then managed to get the lead back before half time, from a successful Blair penalty shot at goal – which he had been avoiding for most of the half – which put the half time score at 8-5 to Edinburgh Academy.



Within two minutes of the second half starting, Accies had increased their point tally to 13 with a fine try in the right corner. Blair got round the outside of the defence and set up a passing move which reached across the field to No 11, Nyle Godsmark, who crashed through two defenders to cross the line for Accies second try. With the wind still playing its part, Blair's kick was wide, but the score was now 13-6 to Accies, augmented a few minutes later by another successful Blair penalty, which stretched the score out to 16-6.

It was now Stew-Mel's turn to dominate the possession and territory battle with a fine display that was finished off with a try near the posts. Forwards and backs combined well to move the ball to within a few metres of the Accies line, and almost putting centre, Neil Bowie through, but again, quick recycled ball had Accies defence scrambling and a maul down the left put McCashin over for their try. Photo and witness 'evidence' suggested that he might have been short of the line, but, as soon as the referee put his hand up and blew his whistle, the try was scored. No arguments. McCashin then

kicked the conversion to pull Stew-Mel up to within three points at 16-13.

From here on, however, the superior game play of the Edinburgh Academy players took over and the rest of the match was largely played deep in the Stew-Mel half. Their reward came with just over five minutes left. A succession of rucks and passes set up the final ruck which, No 8, Callum Reid, took advantage of to burrow through and score the decisive try. With Blair's kick going over, the 23-13 scoreline put the match beyond the reach of Stew-Mel and the clock finally ticked over to full time.

The game was ended with the ball being fired high into the stand from Accies to call time on a match worthy of the reward on offer.

With this match, the RBS Leagues were drawn to a close and next season sees Boroughmuir return to the top flight after their brief sojourn in the National League, to join Heriots, Currie and, of course, Edinburgh Accies as Edinburgh's representatives at the top table of Scottish club rugby.



Images from the match will appear [here](#) over the next few days.