

Rugby – Scottish Rugby Club Finals Day

Edinburgh sides lift four of the six trophies on offer



It was Scottish Rugby's Finals' Day on Saturday and five Edinburgh-ish based teams had made it through to the six finals on offer. Moving away from the wide open spaces at Murrayfield – lack of a playing surface probably playing a part as well – Dalzeil Rugby Club played host to the RBS Women's Bowl and Shield finals and Broadwood Stadium in Cumbernauld hosted the other four, those being the men's RBS Bowl, Shield and Cup and the women's Sarah Beannie Cup Final.

First up was the Women's RBS Bowl Final and Broughton had won through to face West coast rivals Ayr. In an exciting match, Broughton eventually came up with the victory 17-7 to take their first ever Silverware. In the Women's RBS Shield Final, it wasn't such good news for Watsonians' women, going down 27-12 against Cartha Queens Park. 10-5 down at half time, Watsonians pulled ahead with a converted try back after the break, but couldn't sustain the pressure, eventually conceding another 15 points without reply. At Broadwood, the first match of the day was the RBS Men's Bowl Final and, following St. Boswell's disqualification for fielding ineligible players, the match was played between Highland and – with about 24 hours notice – Glenrothes. In spite of their lack of preparation, Glenrothes put up a spirited fight, but were always playing catch-up. 14-0 ahead at the break, Highland went on to win fairly comfortably 27-12, conceding a late try to give Glenrothes a bit of pride to take back to Fife. (No images from these matches, unfortunately)



Next match on the cards was the RBS Men's Shield Final between Caithness and Preston Lodge. Unbeaten in their Division this season, PL kept their record with a 27-6 win over their Northern opponents. Caithness were first with some points from an early penalty, but PL soon evened the scoring, before going ahead 10-3 with a try after 14 minutes. Caithness pulled three points back with a penalty on the half hour mark, but that was the last they were to see of the scoreboard. A few minutes later, PL crossed the whitewash for a touchdown, but they were pulled back for a forward pass. However, just before half time Preston Lodge did score their second, converted try with a fine move down the right which gave Blair Robertson a bit of space to get around the outside of the defence for the score.



With just five minutes of the second half played, the PL forwards then had a go and rolled over in the corner from a line-out maul for their third try, scored by Man-of-the-Match Paul Voy. They almost followed up with another less than a minute later, Finlay Hughes being pulled up a few metres short by a fine defensive tackle. They didn't have to wait too long, however, as scrum half, Dale Gordon, broke through a despairing tackle to dive over for PL's fourth try and the 27-6 lead they went on to win the match with. Caithness, like Glenrothes before them, were always on the back foot and although crossing the line for a disallowed try, really didn't look like taking the match.



Next 'item on the agenda' was the Women's Sarah Beannie Cup Final between Melrose and Murrayfield Wanderers. This match was a bit more one-sided as Wandies went on the outscore Melrose 12-2 in the try count. They started early with a battling run from Suzy McKerlie-Hex who swept all aside as she fought through for the first try with less than two minutes on the clock. They followed this up with tries after seven

minutes from Player-of-the-Match, Hatty Cumber, 18 minutes from Laura Steven, 26 minutes from Cat Ward, another from Cumber – and the first to be converted by a change of kicker from Sarah Law to Sarah Gill – on the half hour and the sixth, and final, try of the half gave Hatty Cumber her hat-trick in her first senior Final. In the interim, Melrose had managed to put six points on the board from one of Scotland's former players, Nicola Halfpenny who knocked over two fine penalties to make the half time score 34-6.

Elise Allier scored yet another for Wandies just after the restart – and while your reporter was still returning from 'hospitality' (or a cheese and pickle sandwich to be more accurate) on the top floor of the stadium – to continue the onslaught. Steven scored her second try on 50 minutes, converted by Gill to stretch the lead even further to 46-6. Despite losing a player to the bin, Wandies notched up their ninth try of the afternoon from Alex Read to break the 50-point barrier at 53-6. Melrose, despite being under the cosh for almost the whole match, then came back with a score of their own, wide on the right by centre, Gillian Ingles, which Halfpenny converted with a tremendous conversion attempt from near the touchline. Then it was back on the horse as Lisa Robertson score for Murrayfield for a 58-13 lead.




Chloe Rollie then went over under the posts following a solo effort which saw her cut through the Murrayfield defence to dot down under the posts, Halfpenny converting for a 58-20 score line with 10 minutes to play. Play which was held up for a lengthy period as Melrose's Natasha Rivera received attention on the field from the medical staff for, what appeared to be, a fairly serious injury. However, a wee check

up in the local hospital, thankfully, gave her the all-clear.

Wandies spent the final 10 minutes completing the task in hand with a further two tries from Lucy Park and Lisa Martin to take the final score out to 68-20.

Melrose had put up a spirited fight, but Wandies were much too strong for the Borders' side – and for everyone else in Scotland – for the result to be in much doubt as they continue to dominate the women's game. Mention should be made of referee Alex Pratt, who had the 'opportunity' to award, possibly, millions of penalties, but did the sensible thing and kept the match moving along.



Final match of the day was 'the big one', the Men's RBS Cup  Final between Glasgow Hawks and Heriots. An early penalty from Heriot's Graham Wilson opened the scoring for the Edinburgh side and from there they went on to dominate the first half. Hawks had a couple of penalty opportunities which drifted wide, but Heriots were able to come back and attack the Hawks line, just failing to cross on a couple of occasions. One occasion which counted was after 13 minutes when Harry Boisseau ran in from distance to score out wide. Wilson then scored the conversion for a 10-0 lead. The rest of the half was mostly played in Hawks' half of the pitch, but it was left to Wilson to score one of the two penalties on offer to go into the break with Heriots 13-0 ahead.

Four minutes into the second half, Jack Steele managed to bisect the posts for the first time with a penalty for Hawks, which they followed up just over five minutes later with their

only try of the afternoon under the posts from prop, Brendan Cullinane. Gavin Lowe knocked the kick over to bring Hawks up to within three points at 13-10.

Heriots then took command of the game and dominated possession and territory. They drove across the line from a close in maul in the 64th minute, but despite viewing the play from various angles on the big screen – TMO at a Scottish club match? Whatever next! – the referee was not able to make rule conclusively, so awarded a five-meter scrum to the attacking side. Using their territorial advantage to the full, Wilson was able to use the next five, or so, minutes to open the gap with two penalties to bring up a 19-10 score line with 10 minutes left to play. And a very decisive 10 minutes it was. Heriots went on to score two further tries, a converted one to the left of the posts from Jack Turley and the second on 79 minutes by Liam Steele to take the match 31-10 and to give Heriots a hat-trick of Cup Final wins.

A superb day at Cumbernauld with blue skies and no wind saw a fine display of Scottish Club rugby from all the teams involved. None of the losing sides 'lay down' to the opposition and they all – even Melrose – made the eventual winners work for their awards to make for an entertaining day's rugby for all concerned.

Images from the three matches at Broadwood will appear [here](#) over the next week or so. It was a long day!