


Rugby – Stewart's Melville v Marr RFC

Stew-Mel eventually overcome Marr for their season's opening win



National League newcomers, Marr RFC, visited sunny Inverleith for their third round match against last year's League runner's-up, Stewarts-Melville. With three defeats and a draw between them, both sides were looking for that elusive first win.

And it was the home side that took an early lead with a try from No.14, Matt Morrell, who was bundled over in the corner for the five points. Nick McCashin then scored the kick to give Stew-Mel a 7-0 lead after just six minutes. However, it only took the visitors a couple of minutes to get on the scoreboard with a long range penalty from their No.10, Rory McGee. The next 20 minutes or so of the match were frustrating for Stew-Mel supporters as their team, worked their way upfield several times, only to be turned over at the breakdown by a the fiercely competitive Marr pack. But, with 10 minutes to go, a successful penalty from McCashin stretched the lead out to 10-3. Straight from the off, however, Marr drove upfield and from a line-out in the home 22, drove No. 7, Paul Burke over for a try. With McGee's successful conversion, the sides were drawn at 10-10.

Back on the attack in the final few minutes, Morrell was stopped just short, but from the resultant recycle, Stew-Mel won another penalty, which McCashin saw over to take the sides into the break at 13-10. 

Marr's McGee drew the sides level again after 15 minutes of the second half. Once again, Stew-Mel attacked from the off and drove Marr back onto their own 22, only a bit of over-ambition keeping the Inverleith side out. But pressure told, and following a break from the centre of the field, another deep incursion was finished off by Mike Hanning running round on the overlap to touch down behind the posts. Another kick over

form McCashin pulled the home side out to a seven point lead at 20-13.

With the match entering the fourth quarter, Marr duplicated Stew-Mel's effort with a fine try from their No.14, Scott Bickerstaff, who stepped inside the Stew-Mel wing to gallop over, touch down and, following the kick from McGee, bring the sides level at 20-20. But it didn't last as the Inverleith side turned the wick up a touch and threw all they had at Marr. With just less than 15 minutes of the match left, a quick tap penalty around half way by Alan Whittingham, caught the away side on the hop and a bit of desperate defending failed to prevent the inside ball off the floor putting McCashin through a yawning gap for Stew-Mel's fourth, and bonus-point, try. McCashin then 'netted' his conversion and the gap was back out to seven at 27-20. Stew-Mel were now in the driving seat and with 10 minutes left scored their fifth and final try through front-row, Hugh Lindsay who broke through the centre of the defence to score near the posts. McCashin scored the kick and at 34-20, and a few minutes left to play, Marr had little chance of coming back. It didn't stop them trying, though, as they put the home defence under a fair bit of pressure, but the match ended with no further scoring and Stew-Mel were the victors at 34-20.

It was a frustrating first half for the home support with Stew-Mel losing possession at almost every breakdown, but they eventually got it together for a fine win against an opposition who refused to go away.

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