

# Rugby – George Watson's College, V Merchiston Castle School, U18 Brewin-Dolphin Schools Cup

*Watsons survive Merchiston fight back to take the Title*



The second match on the night at BT Murrayfield had a hard act to follow as the U18 teams took the field to compete for their Schools Cup Final. This match was a less even affair with Watsons dominating the majority of possession and territory – certainly in the second half – but Merchiston refused to lie down and came within a score of winning at the end.

The match started well for Watsons with their first points on the board with a 35<sup>th</sup> second penalty, courtesy of the boot of stand-off, Kerr Stoddart. Unfortunately, a few minutes later the lost one of their players, carted off with, what appeared to be, a fairly serious injury.

The first try scoring opportunity came the way of Watsons. Surviving a period of Merchiston possession, Watsons set up a fine passing move which put centre, Ronan Kerr through the defence. It was only a fine tackle back by opposing centre, Cameron Gray, which stopped them adding to their score.

In fact, it was Merchiston who came up with the first try of the match. Swinging the ball wide, left wing, Louie Tang, left defenders in his wake as he sprinted up the touchline, deep into the Watsons 22. The final man in defence stopped him, but he got the ball away to fellow Merchistonian, Stafford McDowall who went over for the try. The kick was missed, leaving the scoreline at 5-3. Despite a late attempt by

Watsons, which nearly came off – failing at the final off-load – Merchiston managed to hold on to their lead at half time.

It took Watsons six minutes of the second half to score their opening try from No. 14, Calum Fox. It was a classic score from the Myreside team, with the pack doing the hard yards in the centre, drawing in the defence. The final ruck set up the ball for scrum half, Davies to release the backs. Quick passing had Fox through a hole and over the line for the try and the lead. Stoddart missed the kick, leaving the score at 8-5.

Less than four minutes later, they were over again. This time it was the other wing, Robbie Nairn, who powered through for the second try and a 13-5 lead.



Merchiston enjoyed a bit of possession for a time, but lost the ball back to Watsons in the opposition half. A line out from a clearing kick, was lost by Merchiston and the ball came back to Stoddart, His kick over put the defence under some pressure and the ball finally went out to Nairn – one to watch – who, again powered over for his second try. Stoddart scored this time to take Watsons into a fairly comfortable lead at 20-3. He followed this up a few minutes later for a 23-5 scoreline with five minutes of the match remaining.

And what a five minutes! Merchiston finally found their feet and scored their first of two tries in that five minutes from a sustained bit of pressure on the defence. Their powerful maul pulled the game right, which left a yawning gap on the left for the backs to exploit. Two quick passes put Tang in the clear for the winger to gallop over for the try. Dan Nutton scored the touchline conversion to bring up a 23-12 score.

Again, from the kick off, pressure on the Watsons defence came

up trumps. Another fine display of running rugby had the defence all over the place and the final ball went to McDowall who fired through for his second on the night (credited to Tom Bisset by Scottish Rugby... Oops...) and, at 23-17 with seconds to play – 12 to be exact – put them in with a chance. The ref decided there was time to restart the game, but despite winning the restart ball and putting up a tremendous fight, Merchiston couldn't advance out of their half and the game ended with an error on their part.

The Cup, therefore went to Watsons for the third time in succession, but if Merchiston had managed to get their act together earlier in the second half, who know what might have been.



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