

Rugby – Watsonians v Stewarts-Melville, BT National League, Div. 1

Bonus point win for 'Sonians at Myreside.



With both teams having lost their matches the week before, a bit of pride was at stake in the latest BT National League Edinburgh Derby to be played out on Saturday at Myreside.

And it was to be [Watsonians](#) who went on to win fairly comprehensively, bagging their bonus point, fourth try, just before the interval.


[Stew-Mel](#) were first off the mark, courtesy of an early Nick McCashin penalty to go 3-0 ahead, and were nearly eight to the good, when centre, when Angus Rennie was driven over the sideline just short a few minutes later, having broken clear 20-odd metres out.

With 11 minutes played, McCashin had another penalty chance but his kick came up short and the home side were able to break from their own try-line. The attack quickly developed and, having created an overlap down the right, wing, Mark Bertram, sailed through to touch down for the opening try. Former Scotland Sevens player, James King, then stepped up to slot home the conversion to take the score to 7-3 to 'Sonians with 12 minutes played.

It took the visitors less than two minutes to pull back to within a point as another McCashin penalty sailed over for a 7-6 score line.

But it wasn't for long as, straight from the restart, King broke up the middle and 'Sonians were, once again, in 'enemy' territory. The ball was driven up to near the try line and a couple of rucks pulled the defence across to the right. Quick ball was fired across to King who then put Bertram through a huge hole in the Stew-Mel defence – the winger having

come well inside – to dot down under the posts. King scored the conversion and the lead had been stretched to 14-6 inside the first quarter.


Stew-Mel then came back and got close down the left, before being stopped short. Once again, quick ball, saw the play switch and Rennie ‘successfully’ crossing the line. Unfortunately, the pass which put him in the clear was adjudged forward, so play was pulled back for a Watsonians scrum. 

The next five, or so, minutes were largely ‘owned’ by the home side as they ramped up the pressure on the visitors, gradually pushing the defensive line back. The final push came through a forwards drive from five metres which saw No. 3, Ali Marsh coming up the try. King, once again scored the kick and 21-6 was the score.

Stew-Mel had, by this time suffered several turn-overs and whenever they did gain possession, they were quickly smothered by an on-the-ball home defence. A defence which turned to attack as, just before the break, the pressure told once more and No. 16, Tom Johnson broke through to score the fourth, and bonus-point, try of the first half for Watsonians. With another King kick going through, the home side were 28-6 ahead and looking good for the win.

The home support, however, wasn’t so confident with tales of second half collapses circulating as the teams came out for the second half.

And it was a fired-up Stew-Mel side who started the half well, driving deep into ‘Sonians territory and putting together a fine string of passing play. A fine string which was cut short as a loose pass from substitute scrum-half, Neil Bowie, landed in the hands of wing, Scott McLeod, who had nothing to do but gallop half the length of the pitch for a fifth home try. King then missed the conversion, but it was a healthy 33-6 score line.

For most of the remainder of the match – over 30 minutes worth – Stew-Mel put in a huge amount of work, and it was only good defence, coupled with a catalogue of Stew-Mel errors that kept the score as was. 

Several penalties were taken quickly by Bowie to keep the match on the boil, but still they failed to cross the whitewash. Until, that is, just before the 20 minute mark. Another tap-and-go from Bowie saw him through the scrambling defence with McCashin on his shoulder. He then off-loaded from a tackle and McCashin crashed through to dive over for the try. McCashin then scored the conversion to make the score 33-13 to Watsonians.

Their next chance came, once again, through Rennie, the centre going over near the corner, but the assistant referee, once again, ruling him over the side line.

Stew-Mel were fairly dominant for the rest of the half and, although there was no further scoring, it was a superb match for the spectators, with the play barely stopping. However, play was, unfortunately, brought to a halt by the referee as McCashin fell to the pitch clutching his knee – ‘diagnosed as a possible ACL injury -following an attempted side step during another Stew-Mel drive.

Just before full time, Watsonians saw their own ‘unfortunate incident’ as prop, Martin Christie was red-carded for a second offence, having seen yellow earlier in the half.

Despite the score line, it was a far from easy win for the Myreside men, as Stew-Mel played by far the better game in the second half. However, the four first half tries, aided, no doubt by Stew-Mel’s seeming inability to keep possession at the recycle, saw them over the line by a fair margin with a bonus point to boot and second place to Marr in the BT National League, Div. 1.

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