

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

Watsonians stay on top with win at Inverleith



For parts of Saturday's Edinburgh derby at Inverleith, the casual observer would have wondered which of Watsonians and Stewarts-Melville were leading the BT National League's Division 1 as the top side travelled all the way to Ferry Road to play the team in ninth.

Playing into a stiff breeze, the home side were out of the traps from the off and deep into the visiting 22, winning an early penalty for crossing, which Mike Hanning saw over for the three points.

However, while they were still patting themselves on the back, Watsonians scored the first try of the match. Centre, DJ Innes carried the ball over halfway and, just before the tackle came in from his opposing number, Sebastian Trotter, he got the pass away to No. 13, Scott Mcleod, putting the outside centre through a huge hole in the opposition defence. He carried into the 22, where he passed the ball onto the accompanying full back, Scott McKean. Stew-Mel's Sean Murchie made the tackle but McKean's momentum took him over for the score. Andrew Chalmers missed his kick but Watsonians were into a 7-3 lead.

By 20 minutes in, Watsonians had increased their tally to 19. The first of the two tries followed a period of Watsonians possession, driving deep into the home half of the field. Keeping the ball moving, Watsonians eventually found themselves within range and No. 8, Matt Coles then received the ball which saw him crashing over for the second try.

Chalmers successful conversion then took the lead out to 12-3.

Four minutes later, they had their third.

Once again, Watsonians drove upfield from the off, but Stew-Mel were keeping them at bay and holding territory when the 12/15 combination struck again. Another offload got McKean up into the line and quick recycle ball from a tackle found wing, Mark Bertram who sailed through under the posts for the second visitor's try. Once again, Chalmers slotted the conversion for a 12-3 lead 15 minutes in.

Once possession was secured from 'Sonians restart clearance, Stew-Mel went to work.

Sean Murchie ran the ball back into the visitor's half before handing over to No. 8, Adam Howie. His offload put No. 6, Hugh Lindsay through, but his run was brought to a halt by Torrie Callandar. However, his tackle was deemed to be too high for the referee's liking so, once the momentum was stopped, the advantage was played and Stew-Mel went for the lineout.

Fortuitously, the loose throw – blame the wind – found Lindsay and recycled ball from the resultant ruck was handed to No. 5. Alexander Rappestad, who took half the Watsonians' pack with him for the touch down.



Hanning kicked his second successful kick of the day and, a couple of minutes from the away side's third try, the home side were up to 19-10.

The remainder of the half was played out without further additions to the score board, but Stew-Mel, probably, had the upper hand in the run down to the break.

The second half started well for Watsonians, and they came

close to scoring five minutes in, but the attack was held out and possession eventually turned over.

But on 53 minutes a successful penalty in the difficult conditions from Chalmers stretched the lead to 22-10.

Then it was Stew-Mel's turn to switch on the pressure. Another loos lineout, once again, fell into friendly hands and the wave of attacks began. Firstly, Hanning was put through five metres out and the stand-off battled his way over the line. The combination of Innes and McKean grappled with Hanning on the floor, but he struggled round and grounded the ball. Unfortunately, the ref had already decided he had been 'held up' so awarded a five-metre scrum rather than the try.

Another couple of scrum followed, with Hanning almost getting clear again, but the ball was eventually turned over and cleared upfield.

The 65th minute then saw the bonus point try for Watsonians. A fairly simple passing move from near half way, put Rory Steele into space enough for the wing to gallop 20-odd metres in for the try. With the wind whistling round the south side of the Inverleith stand, Chalmers kept the ball low for the conversion and added the points for a 29-10 lead.

The home side now took up the cudgel again and, in a series of penetrating moves, shifted the match into 'Sonians' 22. Winning a succession of penalties in the five metre zone, the pack rumbled and battered their way to the line, eventually finding a gap for Michael McDonald to burrow through for the try. Hanning scored the conversion, but the game was over and, with a bout of fisticuffs and a red card for Fraser Strachan for overuse of the boot in a ruck to gee up the support for the final few minutes, the match drew to a close, 29-17 to Watsonians.

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