

# Rugby – Watsonians v Stewarts-Melville, BT Cup, Round 2

*Five tries for 'Sonians Secures Final 16 Place*



*Feature image courtesy of Alastair Ross of [Novantae Photography](#)*

Watsonians scored five tries on their way to a hard fought twin over city rivals – and fellow BT National League 1 side – Stewarts-Melville at Myreside on Friday night. The weather leading up to the match was decidedly dodgy and, while the rain relented a bit, the high winds made it a handling nightmare for both teams. The home side had dipped into their impressive back catalogue and had come up with James King, David Blair and Andrew Chalmers with Simon Taylor hovering in the background....

Watsonians took charge with an early try in the fifth minute from hooker, Tom Johnson. Up near the opposition try line, the home side were turned over, but the clearing kick was charged down and Johnson was first to the ball for the opener. David Blair stepped up for the conversion and, on a night he was to struggle with the boot, came up short, but 5-0 was the early score.

The remainder of the first quarter was mostly played in the Stew-Mel half, with Watsonians maintaining their league dominance in this particular Cup match and it was only fine defence and a couple of handling errors that kept them from scoring further.

With around 20 minutes played, an attack set up deep gave Stew-Mel the first real sniff of a score and the backs did their job, putting Ali Grieg in space down the left and giving him a fairly easy gallop in for the try. Stand-off, Mike Hanning then added the extras to give the visitors the lead – for the first and last time in the match – 7-5.

Just over five minutes later, Johnson scored his and 'Sonians second try of the match to retake the lead, but Blair once again failed to find the uprights so 10-7 was the lead going into the final 10 minutes of the first half.

Watsonians were now on a surge and only just being held out by the Stew-Mel defence, with Andrew Chalmers almost getting over, but he was stopped short. However, the play carried on in the visiting 5 metre zone as Watsonians turned over a scrum and a series of rucks set up the score for flanker, Jonny Neary, who squeezed over next to the posts for his side's third try. Blair couldn't miss this one, could he..? Yes, he could! His conversion attempt rattled off the posts for his third miss, but it was now 15-7 to the home side, a lead they took into the break.



Soon after the restart, Watsonians were on the scoreboard again with their fourth try. David Blair got the play rolling following a turn over and his wide pass found its way via a series of reverse passes and deft handling to Mark Bertram and the winger went over in the corner for, what had to be, the try of the match. Blair missed his fourth conversion – this one more forgivable than the previous two – so the score remained at 20-7.

From the restart, Stew-Mel retained the ball and launched an attack up the middle of the pitch. Hanning carried the ball up to the advancing defence, but slipped the ball to Angus Rennie near half way. Rennie then fired himself through a yawning gap and sprinted the near 40 metres to the line, diving over unopposed under the posts. Hanning then converted to take Stew-Mel up to within a score at 20-14.

To bring the 10 minute flurry of scoring to a close, Watsonians then scored their fifth try as, on the 50<sup>th</sup> minute mark, they found space down the left for Rory Steele to exploit before the home side winger passed inside to Blair who finished off the move with the try. He then converted to stretch the score out to 27-14.

That was to prove the final score of the match and despite a few forays,

Stew-Mel never looked especially dangerous, and, perhaps, they suffered the consequences of a raft of handling errors which put them on the back foot in a number of promising positions. Watsonians, for their part, gave a fine display of running rugby on a terrible night for any sport and finished off the match where they had spent the majority of time – in Stew-Mel's half.

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