

# Rugby – Stewarts-Melville v Peebles, RBS National League – Div. 1

*Five second half tries and bonus point for Stew-Mel at Inverleith*



Not for the first time this season were the sides at Inverleith welcomed by gale force winds whistling around the stand from the West, making play decidedly tricky in the latest round of the RBS National League's First Division.

Peebles were the visitors this time around and the Borders' side were facing an uphill – but down wind, in the first half – struggle to remain in the Division. Stew-Mel, on the other hand, were gradually climbing up the table after a fairly shaky start to the season.

The first half was mostly played in Stew-Mel's half, with the visitors taking full advantage of the conditions to keep the home side pinned back. What they couldn't take advantage of, however, was field position. They were inside Stew-Mel's 22 and up near their goal line several times, but failed to capitalise, with mistakes and turn-overs frustrating the players, coaching staff and travelling support as they only lead 3-0 at the break following a seventh minute penalty from 10, Greg Raeburn.

Stew-Mel, for their part, showed brief flashes of attacking flair, with a break from No. 7, Hugh Lindsay, almost coming off as he charged through the lineout as everyone stood and watched, getting run down by the opposing scrum half, Donald Anderson, about 10 metres out.

The second half was to prove an entirely different affair...



A restart error by Peebles – that wind again – gave Stew-Mel front-foot ball and a gallop up the middle by Alexander Rappestad brought play deep into Peebles' half. He was stripped of the ball, but a couple of minutes later, Stew-Mel had a close in penalty awarded which captain, Mike Hanning, kicked to touch. They then won the lineout and, in the ensuing melee, No. 4, Fraser Morrison, broke away to dive over for the try. Hanning then scored with the conversion to put Stew-Mel 7-3 ahead with less than five minutes of the second half played.

Just over two minutes of the match passed before the home side crossed the whitewash again. This time, a fine break from Hanning through the defence, gave his men space and the ball ended up with wing, Ciaran Whyte who had a clear run in under the posts. Hanning converted again and, suddenly, it was 14-3.

Peebles had a fair bit of possession over the next 10, or so, minutes, frustrating a Stew-Mel assault before launching upfield with their riposte, but once again they lost possession and Hanning cleared to touch, deep inside the visitors' 22. With the wind playing its part in proceedings, the throw went somewhat awry and Stew-Mel set up a rolling maul which clawed its way to the line. Lindsay broke clear with the ball, but he was tackled short and the referee deemed the ball 'held up' and awarded a home five-metre scrum. With their pack performing well, Stew-Mel chose to push and pushed the opposition back to, and over, their line, leaving No. 8, Adam Howie the simple task of falling on the ball for the try. Hanning missed his kick, but the score had now stretched out to 19-3 with 25 minutes still to play.

It was to prove a fairly eventful 25 minutes as well. Eventful in the number of penalties and drooped ball were concerned, at

least. Peebles did press the home defence a bit, but had to settle for a successful penalty from the boot of Anderson to make it a 19-6 score line, but the final couple of minutes were to prove catastrophic for the visitors.

With the pitch-side clock showing 0:00 – it, irritatingly doesn't keep time with the referee's watch – Peebles had just weathered and escaped from, another Stew-Mel attack on their line, but they lost possession inside their 22. From the ruck, the ball went out to centre, Ali Greig and, with just Donald Anderson – one of four Andersons in the starting 15, he piled over for the try, followed in by the despairing Callum Anderson, who failed to prevent the score. Once again, Hanning was on song and his successful kick made it a 26-6 score.

Game over? Not quite, as it turned out.



With the, presumably, referee's watch ticking down to 80 minutes, Stew-Mel collected the restart and set off once again. This time, they were all but unopposed as the final passing move from Hanning to Jamie Berrisford set up Greig for a clear run in to the line for his second try in as many minutes. Hanning's final attempt at the posts went wide, but at 31-6, it was a fine win for the Inverleith squad securing sixth place in the Div. 1 table and, probably, condemning Peebles to – at best – a relegation play-off spot at season's end.

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