

Rugby – Watsonians v Melrose, BT Premiership

Watsonians find it tough near the top



Second played fourth on Saturday as Melrose were the latest BT Premiership side to visit newcomers Watsonians and, maybe, see what all the fuss was about. The home side have had a fairly successful return to the top division, beating the likes of Heriots and Boroughmuir on their way to fourth in the table.

And it appeared to be a fine start to the match against the current second place side, Melrose, as they had the majority of the play in the first quarter.

Indeed, they crossed the line for, what appeared to be the opening try after fifteen, but full back, Ally Davidson, had the ball knocked loose by Melrose's Jason Baggott as he crossed the line.

It was Melrose who, a couple of minutes later, were to open the scoring with a try from No. 7 – the first of a brace – Ruaridh Knott. Retaining possession from the restart, Melrose drove up the pitch through a combination of passing and a long distance rolling maul until they were in sight of the home try line. Then, a missed tackle on centre, George Taylor, opened up the opportunity. Quick ball out to the right put Knott in space for an easy run in to score. Baggott missed the kick, but, with just over 20 minutes played, it was 5-0 to Melrose.

Coming under some pressure, Watsonians regained possession from a fumble in the middle of the pitch and No. 22, Ewan Scott – on as an early sub – put in a clearing kick downfield. It looked like an easy gather for Melrose wing, Nyle Godsmark,

but chasing opposition winger, Max McFarland, caught Godsmark's eye and he fluffed the catch which McFarland immediately pounced on, broke the tackle and got his pass away. Now that Melrose were scrambling for a defence, Watsonians took full advantage and centre, Scott McLeod, broke through to touch down. With Scott's kick going over, Watsonians were now in front 7-5.



However, Melrose were now beginning to get the measure of their opponents and began to pile on the pressure. It was pressure that nearly told as lock, Iain Moody, with a couple of, fairly clear, metres to go to the line, had the ball knocked from his grasp.

But the inevitability of all the territorial and possession advantage eventually told as another side-to-side passing move put Knott over for his second. This time Baggott slotted the kick and the sides went into the break with Melrose 12-7 ahead.

The second half was largely forgettable as – other than Melrose's two tries – the visitors used their experience and skill to keep Watsonians in their own half.

The first try came after less than five minutes from a sustained attack on the home line, wing, Neil McCann, emerging from the pile-up for the try and a 17-7 score line.

And that was that. Melrose went into lock-down and, despite a brief foray or two, into the opposition half, Watsonians were largely confined to their own territory through a combination of defence and, when the opportunity rose, fine tactical kicking from Baggott and his fellow backs.



It was never going to end well for the home side, though, and,

going into the dying seconds, No. 15, Craig Jackson crossed the line for Melrose's fourth, and bonus-point, try. Baggott then scored the conversion to take the final score out to 24-7 to Melrose.

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