

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

Dundee hold on at Inverleith.



From the sublime of Friday night to the less sublime of Saturday afternoon saw Stewarts-Melville battle back from a 21-point deficit to gain a losing bonus point against Dundee. Eleventeen early penalties in the five metre zone saw two of Stew-Mel's side confined to the bin as the referee flourished his yellow card within the first ten minutes of Saturday's match starting.

Despite early dominance, it took nine minutes against 14, then 13, men for Dundee to open the scoring with a well worked try for wing, Isoa Matacagi, to score under the posts. No. 10, Fraser McKay then added the extras for 7-0.

Stew-Mel then won turnover ball soon after the restart and forced the visitors to defend in their 22, giving away a couple of their own penalties, which eventually lead to the home side's Mike Hanning scoring with a kick from out in front for 7-3.

Two minutes later, and the gap had opened again as Dundee used their personnel advantage and fired straight back up the pitch, creating an overlap which McKay used to slot a grubber through for Matacagi to run on to and score his second try. McKay missed the conversion so the score remained at 12-3 with around 20 minutes remaining

It was 20 minutes dominated both possession- and territory-wise by Stew-Mel, but, despite a couple of near misses through

being held-up and knocking on centimetres short as well as a, locally popular, yellow for one of their players, somehow, Dundee survived to stay ahead 12-3 at the break.

The visitors started the second half as they had started the first, with an early try. Working the ball up into the far left corner, the forwards set to work and managed to overcome the defence to put prop, Darrel Russell through for the touch down. McKay then scored the conversion to open the gap further to 19-3.

Once again, Dundee had to weather another storm of Stew-Mel attacking play, but once again, they came out the other side with another try, this one down the right for their 15, Blair Cochrane. McKay missed this attempt but the score was 24-3 going into the final quarter.



The hosts then hammered away for the remainder of the match, but they couldn't quite get the break required until, with six minutes to go, a series of rucks and mauls across the face of the goal area moved the ball from the left corner to the right where lock, Sami Paulsson fired himself through the bodies for Stew-Mel's first try of the match. Hanning then kicked a successful, if somewhat difficult kick to put a bit of cheer back in the home support.

Now a man down, Dundee were forced to defend for their lives – Hanning crossed for a 'virtual' try, but the referee had already blown up for 'something' – and as the clock reached 80 minutes, Paulsson scored his and Stew-Mel's second try with a battling charge in from five metres. Hanning knocked over the kick, but it was – as they say – too little, too late and the home side just failed with their second come-back in two weekends, so had to settle for that losing bonus point and 11th in the BT National League, Div. 1 table.

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