

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

*Marr fend off Stew-Mel fightback to take the points*



It was First v Ninth in Round 13 of the BT National League encounter at Inverleith on Saturday as table topping Marr made the journey down from Aberdeenshire to play Stewarts-Melville. Stew-Mel, for their part, were hoping to make the return journey feel a little longer, but, realistically, were hoping for a bonus point.

And they were close to getting their point for a while as, despite opening the scoring from a first minute Mike Hanning penalty, Marr scored three first half tries to one to open a 15-8 lead by the break.

The first of these came just before the quarter hour with a nicely worked move from just inside their own half which was finished off by flanker, Angus Johnston, who collected an offload before running the ball in for the try. With stand-off, Colin Sturgeon's attempt hitting the post, the score was 5-0.

The next three scores were evenly spaced by 10-ish minutes throughout the half.

Marr's two scores, in the shape of tries, came in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> minutes. The first of these was scored by Sturgeon as the No. 10 nipped round the side of a ruck to dive over after sustained pressure on the home try line. He couldn't follow up with the conversion, however, so it was 10-3 to the visitors.

The third try was another forward score, this time by the other flanker, Mackenzie Pearce, following a penalty line out and a fine passing move from close in.

Things, by this time, were looking more than ominous for Stew-Mel as they couldn't retain the ball for any great length of time – despite some early pressure – as the Marr pack were well on top of their counterparts and this, coupled with an off-loading game any Professional side would have been proud of, kept the visitors able to press forward.



Hope came for Stew-Mel with a minute, or so, left in the half as they managed to get a sustained attack going and centre, Euan Morrison, made a penetrating run from just inside the Marr half before being intercepted deep in the 22. However, he got the pass away and the ball passed through a hand or two before finding wing, Jamie Ferguson, who dived over in the corner for the try. Hanning was then unable to convert, so the teams went into the break at 15-8 to Marr.

Another early score for the home side gave the support some hope as another Ferguson try – this one from some distance out – three minutes in to the half, made it a two pointer at 15-13. Hanning's kick, once again, went somewhat awry so the two point gap remained.

The match then returned to 'type' for the next 20-odd minutes as Marr turned the screw and launched wave after wave of attacks on the home defence and scored two tries in the process.

Both tries were scored from rolling mauls off penalty lineouts in the right hand corner and both were scored by the same man. Marr's No. 5, Dan Law. And, in an amazing streak of *deja vu*, Sturgeon missed both kicks. However, it was now 25-13 and. With only 20 minutes left, it was looking nigh on impossible

for the home side to take anything away.

This 'near impossibility' was then compounded as, five minutes later, Sturgeon scored his first successful kick with a penalty from in front of the posts for 28-13.

Stew-Mel did score late on to close the gap with a try from Jonny Grant, but the game was over and Marr had consolidated their place at the top, while Stew-Mel had slipped a place to 10<sup>th</sup>.

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