

Rugby – Stewart's Melville v Lasswade, Tennent's National League, Div 2

Lasswade were the latest visitors to Inverleith to face a home side in Stewart's Melville who were beginning to find their feet and rack up some impressive scores in the National League's second division.



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Following the kick off, the first lineout was adjudged to be squint but a good drive from the pack earned a penalty and an accurate touch finder from Michael Miller. This time, it was a clean lineout and Fraser Morrison broke through to score with just under 5 minutes played. Euan Morrison added the extras. Stew Mel 7 Lasswade 0.

As play resumed, a penalty for not releasing allowed Lasswade some territory but possession was soon lost. Chris Baikie then took off on one of his trademark runs but, unfortunately, found himself isolated, conceding a penalty.

Another lineout followed and Stew Mel managed to steal the ball, Freddie Roddick taking the initiative and moving the ball wide, but further progress was halted by another penalty. Eventually one did come Stew Mel's way due to a high tackle, with the resulting touch finder being more than a little wind assisted.

The subsequent scrum saw an impressive drive by the Stew Mel forwards, with a penalty and more possession. It was Doug Randall this time with a powerful, evasive run in from the 22, making it Stew Mel 12 Lasswade 0 with 17 minutes played.

Lasswade were seeing less of the ball but they still were trying to launch attacks into Stew Mel's half, and, with a number of penalties coming their way, they did make some progress, though their hands did fail them at times. With the penalty count mounting against Stew Mel, a yellow card was not long in coming, the recipient being talisman Michael Miller.

With the one man advantage and after an uncharacteristic Stew Mel mistake in midfield, the opportunity was seized by the visitors' number 13, David Hall, who scored under the posts. The easy conversion made the score Stew Mel 12 Lasswade 7 with 25 minutes played.



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At the restart there was another good break by Lasswade but this was eventually halted. Possession was then won back due to a knock on and Randall was off again, with the ball eventually finding Freddie Roddick who cruised over for a great team try. 30 minutes gone, Stew Mel 19 Lasswade 7.

The kick at the restart didn't quite have the legs against the wind and James Ferguson was the next to step up and show his ability and his strength, making further progress into Lasswade's 22. It didn't seem long before Miller returned, and, around the same time, Ferguson continued where he had left off with another try. 35 minutes gone, Stew Mel 24 Lasswade 7.

As half time approached there was still time for more, and, after a period of forward domination, Ruairidh Mitchell powered over. Half time Stew Mel 31 Lasswade 7.

With a healthy lead established, the challenge for the home side in the second half was going to be playing into the wind and, therefore, dealing with the increase in pressure from the opposition that that would likely bring. It was, however, up to Lasswade to exert that pressure – and, right from the

restart, it was evident that Stew Mel were determined to win, to retain possession and to stamp out any resurgence that might occur.

By this stage, Connor McKay had entered the fray and the 'Galloway Bull' (N.B. Moniker has required parental clearance) made his presence known, contributing to the next try which saw number 8 Denis Pech driving over. 45 minutes in, Stew Mel 36 Lasswade 7.



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The screw was beginning to turn as Stew Mel again applied more pressure, and after some last ditch defending by Lasswade, quick ball wide to Sean Murchie, Stew Mel's number 14, ensured the next try. 50 minutes gone, Stew Mel 41 Lasswade 7.

Stew Mel once again collected well at the restart, and, with Lasswade under further pressure, mistakes were inevitably

being made and the scrums were only going one way as Stew Mel continued to bulldoze their way into Lasswade's half.

After being awarded a scrum 5 metres out, the next score wasn't long in coming, Roddick crossing for his second. That made it Stew Mel 46 Lasswade 7 with around 65 minutes played.

It was one way traffic at this stage, with Alex Rappestad charging up the middle of the park, and quick ball through the backs and some exceptionally good handling led to another try by Murchie. The successful conversion brought the score, with 70 minutes played, to Stew Mel 53 Lasswade 7.

Another restart, another lineout and scrum with Stew Mel again retaining the ball ... and another score, this time by 'Man of the Match' Fraser Strachan. Stew Mel 58 Lasswade 7.



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In the dying moments another yellow card was shown but the game was all but over at this stage with the final score standing at Stew Mel 58 Lasswade 7.

Match report courtesy of Stew Mel's Kevin Murchie.

Images from the match can be [viewed here](#), courtesy of Jackie

MacKenzie, to whom thanks should go for being able to submit anything given the trying conditions.