

Rugby – Stewarts Melville v Peebles, Tennent's NL2

With three wins from four matches so far, Stewarts Melville were hoping to maintain their momentum in the Tennent's NL2 division with a win over, the visitors to Inverleith, Peebles.

Peebles

kicked off towards the Ferry Road end on a damp afternoon; the ball,

was, however well taken by Stewart's Melville and James Ferguson

was immediately off, offloading to Dave Allan who found Euan.

His

kick through pushed the visitors back although they did manage to

hold on to possession.

Unfortunately

in the early stages play was stopped due to a head injury to Connor

Mackay, bringing his afternoon to a premature end, and Tom Petiau's

to an early start.



Stew Mel were on it from the start

Great

work by the pack at the first scrum of the afternoon saw the home

side regaining possession and the opportunity to attack, Euan Morrison again involved with good hands from Michael Miller and Joe

Bailey keeping up the momentum. Peebles defended well, however,

winning a scrum and managing to clear their lines.

The

tables were then turned once more as Stewart's Melville won the

line out, Momo leading the charge from 10m out. A penalty in Stew

Mel's favour, a line out and a drive from 5m out saw Doug Randall in

for the first try of the afternoon, to the delight of not only the

Inverleith faithful but also that of his travelling support from

Portsmouth – the journey was worthwhile, after all! Euan added the extras, and, with ten minutes played, it was Stewart's Melville 7 – Peebles 0.

At the restart Matt Sanderson gathered well, allowing Jamie Sword to progress, and, with good hands from Sean, Momo and Euan, some width was exploited. A kick through by Fraser Strachan then forced Peebles on to the back foot once more, and, in an attempt to move the ball, their pass was adjudged to be forward.

Another good scrum, good hands and more pressure resulted in a penalty and a line out 5m out, but, unfortunately, this time, despite being so close, we could not capitalise and a penalty in Peebles' favour gave them a 'get out of jail' card.

The Border's side then enjoyed some possession and attempted to kick downfield for territory but the ball was well retrieved by Matthew, and, thereafter, Jamie McGurk breaking through, but the slippery ball was lost.

The home side were soon back in the ascendancy and it was one way traffic with around 20 minutes played, with the pressure resulting in a

kick-able

penalty. With only one converted try at this stage, the opportunity

to get three points was a no-brainer for Euan. Stewart's Melville

10 – Peebles 0.



Peebles scored their two tries in the first half

The

movement of the ball between both forwards and backs was impressive

at this stage, but, maybe, a little too ambitious, as, against the

run of play, the opportunity for an interception came, giving Peebles

their first points. 25 minutes played, Stewart's Melville 10 – Peebles 7.

Though

Stewart's Melville continued their dominance and were definitely

playing all the rugby, Peebles had their tails up after scoring and

were starting to gain more possession and territory, a well executed

kick bobbling into touch 5m from the Stew Mel's try line.

It was then Peebles' turn to apply the pressure, and, although Stewart's Melville did receive some respite, with a penalty coming their way, this was short lived as the visitors attacked once more, utilising the width of the pitch. Some uncharacteristically poor defending then allowed them in for a well deserved try which was duly converted.

With around 35 minutes on the clock the scoreline was Stewart's Melville 10 – Peebles 14, and thanks to a solid defensive effort in the last 5 minutes, that's where the half time score remained .

Stewart's Melville got the second half underway and further pressure from Peebles led to a penalty and an easy 3 points around the 50 minute mark. Stewart's Melville 10 – Peebles 17.

There was more of a balance in play at this stage, in terms of possession, and there appeared to be a degree of panic on both sides, particularly from Stewart's Melville, who found themselves chasing the game despite their early dominance.



There were a couple of close shaves for the visitors, but they defended well

Patience

is a virtue, though, and its reward seemed to be coming as the Inverleith men attacked from 10m out – only to be met by a solid

Peebles response that saw the visitors clear the danger back to the half way line.

At this

point Neil Bowie entered the fray and added what was needed in the

midfield, helping us to gain some important territorial advantage and

the opportunity to attack once more, with Joe Bailey enjoying a trenchant run up the stand side.

This

resulted in more pressure on the Peebles line, and, although possession was lost, it was eventually regained for a sustained

period, giving Fraser Strachan the chance to nip over for the

try,
which, although long in coming, was most welcome.
Unfortunately the
additional 2 points were not added. 65 minutes played,
Stewart's
Melville 15 – Peebles 17.

There was
now a visible but controlled urgency in the way that Stewart's
Melville were playing as they applied more pressure, and,
eventually
Ruairidh Mitchell powered his way over. The electronic score
board,
batteries now recharged, indicated 70 minutes and the score
line
Stewart's Melville 22 – Peebles 17.



The home side were still going hard near the final whistle
With a
tense 10 minutes left, tempers were somewhat frayed and an
altercation saw the first yellow cards being produced, the

recipients

on both sides. Losing Joe at any time is a major loss but at least

it was 14 vs 14. The moral of the story is, however, 'don't mess

with Joe Bailey!'

As Stewart's Melville continued to apply pressure, we were awarded a penalty that was clearly kick-able. The more conservative among us would have taken the 3 points, however, with the dominance being displayed at this point, the right decision was to go for the fourth try and the bonus point and it came courtesy of James Ferguson, coming off his left wing and bursting through. Final score: Stewart's Melville 27 – Peebles 17.

Thanks to Stew Mel for the report and Jackie MacKenzie for the images

Images from the match will [appear here](#)