

Sands strike sparks Watsonians win

Watsonians player-coach Dan Coultas (pictured, white shirt) set a target of gaining a place in the top six of the men's Premiership ahead of the winter shut-down and he has achieved that comfortably.

In fact, Watsonians have climbed to fourth position following their 5-0 victory over bottom club Grove Menzieshill at Peffermill on Tuesday night.

Goals by Fraser Sands, Danny Cain, Robbie Greenhaugh, Roderick Craig and Andrew Fraser-Harris secured the points against a Dundee side which offered little up-front but stuck to their task.

It did, however, take the home side until late in the first quarter on their tenth incursion into the opposition circle to open their account, and what a goal it was.

Dominant Coultas, who commanded midfield all night, the former Great Britain squad player spraying passes all over the surface, picked up the ball in the centre of the pitch near the half-way line and bulleted the ball towards the opposition penalty spot.

Sands was in the right place at the right time to deflect the ball high into the roof of the net. Grove's goalkeeper had no chance and the lightening-fast strike was followed by two goals in the second quarter for an overall half-time score of 3-0.

Disjointed Grove continued to work hard but were no match for the Edinburgh combine who continued to dominate possession in the second-half.

The visitors' sporadic attacks carried little threat even when they had a man advantage after an off-the-ball incident deep in the third quarter which left Watsonians with only ten men.

Craig counted in that quarter and the men in maroon continued to flood forward in the final session, Fraser-Harris rounding off the scoring after a raid down the right saw the ball squared across the goalmouth and the Watsonians man bundled the ball home from close range.

Coultas said: "This was a solid performance built on our successful defence. We could have had a few more goals but we targeted a top six finish before the break and we have achieved that."

The Scottish Hockey table shows Watsonians on 17 points from nine games and they are in fourth spot on goal difference over Dunfermline Carnegie, the early pace-setters.

Coultas now takes his men across the Capital on Saturday (Fettes College, 15.00) to square-up to second-placed Grange who have 23 points, two adrift of leaders Western Wildcats who have a game in hand.

Grove prop up the table with one point from eight games and a goal difference of minus 40 having only scored five goals and conceded 45 and they must pick themselves up to face city rivals Dundee Wanderers at Dawson Park on Saturday (15.40).