

Hockey – Grange meet arch rivals Western in play-off final

Grange, the newly-crowned men's Premiership champions, strolled into the final of the hockey play-offs with an 8-2 demolition of Clydesdale as they home in on a glory double.

The Edinburgh side went behind early but recovered to move 2-1 ahead before the Glasgow outfit hit back to level after seven minutes of the second session.

But the champions rammed home another three before the break and completed the comfortable success in the final session and now meet Western Wildcats in Sunday's final (4pm) at Glasgow's National Hockey Centre.

Martin Shepherdson, Grange's team manager, said that the win was a comfortable one and he felt that his men had enough even when Clydesdale levelled at 2-2.

He added: "We had three or four great chances early on and we kept creating chances. Our boys were still running at 8-2 and so we go into the final with confidence."

Gordon Amour will miss the game as the Scottish international is at a wedding in Amsterdam but two other players, missing on Saturday, will be in Glasgow.

Earlier, it was Johnny Bradley who broke the deadlock for Clydesdale but the reply came swiftly with David Nairn levelling before Dylan Bean (pictured during a recent Premiership game by **Nigel Duncan**) fired the Capital combine ahead, the first of a glory treble.

Clydesdale, cheered on by a healthy number of fans, pressed and levelled following a penalty corner award, captain Andrew Allan slamming the ball into the rigging, but they were undone when Calum Lothian netted, deflecting an Albert Rowling shot high into the net mid-way through the session.

Aiden McQuade added a fourth from a short corner early in the third and Lothian made it 5-2 in the dying seconds of the session.

Clydesdale kept battling and withdrew their goalkeeper Callum Douglas with less than seven minutes remaining and it proved costly as Bean picked up the ball, moved at pace into the Clydesdale half and sent the ball into the top of the net for 6-2.

A minute later Nairn grabbed his second from a breakaway down the left and Clydesdale brought their goalkeeper back on. Another attack and another goal for the champions who continued to press.

The Clydesdale defence was caught out and a penalty stroke was awarded. Bean made no mistake, sending the ball into the net low to his right for 8-2.

Western Wildcats recovered from going 1-0 down to the students, Robbie Croll netting from a penalty corner, and they had a chance to go 2-0 up from a penalty stroke, but veteran goalkeeper Gavin Sommerville dived to his right to save and keep the Glasgow side in the game.

The students led 1-0 at the half-time break but Western then scored four without reply to take control, two coming quickly

at the end of the third quarter of a tight game.