

# **Green shines in the gloom as Grange claim six**

**The facts are that Scottish Premiership pace-setters Grange swept Inverleith aside 6-0 to claim another three points and consolidate pole position in the 12-strong table.**

However, before going any further, the players, officials and the fans huddled on the touchline, deserve enormous credit for sticking it out during this hockey match played in horrendous conditions.

Almost incessant horizontal rain and a chill wind, which whipped wickedly across the Fettes pitch from the east, made great demands on all present, particularly the players and officials, but, somehow, they match managed to produce some fine passages of play.

And in James Green, an 18-year-old recruit for Grange from Clydesdale, who is studying at Heriot-Watt University, they have a rising star who stood out in the gloom, producing some eye-catching runs at real pace. Surely, he is one for the future at international level.

Both sides gave their all and Inverleith stuck to their task. They were missing several players and Grange were also under-strength with regulars David Nairn, Joe Waterston and Gordon Amore all missing.

They did well to be elsewhere on a night when even ducks would

have balked at making an appearance, so bad were the conditions.

Earlier, Grange started on the front foot, taking the play to Inverleith, and they were rewarded after four minutes when Dylan Bean rifled the club's first penalty corner into the rigging. The goalkeeper had no chance.

The champions dominated possession as the rain poured down, spray coming off the surface each time a player hit the ball or when a player ran at pace across the sodden pitch.

Inverleith were living off scraps and were forced onto the outside when they attacked but the Grange players defied the conditions to move the ball at pace and it was from one of their quick breaks that skipper Alan Johnston netted No 2 seconds from the end of the first quarter.

It would have been easy for Paul Taylor's Inverleith young side to throw in the towel but they kept plugging away even if they found it difficult to consistently put pressure on Grange.

They did, however, pose the home side some problems, particularly in the third quarter, and Grange player Callum Lothian had to stop a shot from a penalty corner on the line but, minutes later, it was 3-0. Captain Johnston drove to the goal-line down the right and found Calum Wood at the top of the D.

He dropped his shoulder then moved to his left before letting fly. The ball thudded against the backboard.

Robbie Croll made it 4-0 from a penalty corner after 52 minutes and Aidan McQuade added another also from a penalty corner six minutes after that as Inverleith understandably tired.

Grange had the final say and Croll completed the scoring in

the final minute, sweeping the ball home first time from the top of the D. A sweet finish.

Coach Taylor saw Inverleith's Jack Kinloch force a save from the Grange substitute goalkeeper on a rare incursion into the Grange D and he was not the only person glad to hear the final whistle.

Taylor sportingly said: "Grange are a good team and we had a good third quarter but once you go behind in conditions like these it is difficult to keep your head up."

Martin Shepherdson, Grange's team manager, said: "At times, we played some good hockey despite the conditions and we created a lot of chances. We should have scored more."

PICTURE: Martin Shepherdson speaks to officials at a previous game. Picture by ***Nigel Duncan***