

# McQuade treble but Croll blow for title-seeking Grange

**Aidan McQuade claimed a glory treble as Scottish Premiership pace-setters Grange swept an under-strength Erskine Stewart's Melville (ESM) side aside.**

They netted seven goals in a dominant performance and, in truth, it could have been more as the eager Grange side passed up a number of opportunities in what was, frankly, a one-side contest.

Admittedly, ESM had six players missing and fielded a number of promising young teenagers who stuck to their task. Joint coach Steve McCurry admitted that this was not a match in which they felt they could take points and they are more focused on the next three games, Hillhead, Clydesdale and Dundee Wanderers, teams in their area of the 12-strong league.

But one wonders how the youngsters will benefit from this pounding as Grange powered forward at every opportunity and, thankfully, ESM goalkeeper Hamish Kinloch, made some telling stops as the clock ticked down in the second half.

Grange led 3-0 after the first two quarters in which their goalkeeper, Scottish international, David Forrester, was a virtual spectator, and it took the visitors only seven minutes to break through.

Joe Waterston netted high into the net after almost constant early pressure and McQuade earned his first from a penalty

corner three minutes later, clinically finishing low into the net.

Livio Belotti added no 3 in 27 minutes with a simple strike and the writing was on the wall for the home side.

They did battle on and, indeed, enjoyed more territory in the second half, but Grange maintained their offensive, eager for more goals. McQuade netted his second and a fourth for Grange firing home low into the net from another penalty corner.

And Dylan Bean was unmarked and in the right place at the right time to capitalise on quick ball for the fifth only two minutes later.

McQuade claimed his treble after 58 minutes, firing high into the net from yet another penalty corner as the stretched ESM defence attempted to stem the flow and Grange skipper Alan Johnston added the seventh, latching onto a loose ball in the D and flicking it home to complete the scoring, near the final whistle.

Bean was among the Grange players to miss chances to increase the agony for ESM, but win No 8 was secured without fuss for Grange who are now looking over their shoulder at Western Wildcats who are gathering momentum.

Martin Shepherdson, Grange's team manager, said: "It was three points and we could have scored more. We were in control of the game but did not maintain the level of play we should have."

A down side was the loss of Robbie Croll, the former Edinburgh University player, who left the field with what appeared to be a shoulder injury. Shepherdson confirmed he was heading for a hospital check.

Elsewhere, Western Wildcats stay tucked in behind Grange following a 7-0 whipping of Watsonians, Adam MacKenzie netting

three, Fraser Calder 2 and singles from Fraser Moran and Andrew McConnell.

Rob Harwood, their skipper, said: "It has taken a while for the team to clock with players injured and missing, but this was an excellent team performance."

Edinburgh University beat Clydesdale 6-4 while Uddingston shutout Kelburne 4-0 while Dundee Wanderers accounted for Tayside rivals Grove Menzieshill 4-1.

The closest game in the division was in Edinburgh where Inverleith edged Hillhead 5-4 at The Mary Erskine School where Charlie Jack netted a treble, his last proving to be the game-winner.

Tom Barton and Jack Henderson netted the others in a game in which Inverleith coach Paul Taylor said he was happy to get a win in another tight game.

He added: "Hillhead were really dangerous on the counter attack and caused us problems but we stood up to everything they threw at us in the last five minutes even after some poor discipline leaving us a man down."

In the women's Premiership, bottom club Gordonians were hammered again, this time by GHK. They shipped nine without reply on this occasion.

PICTURES: Action from ESM by ***Nigel Duncan***





Steve McCurry (left) and Andrew Brogdon trying to find an answer as ESM are pegged back. Picture **Nigel Duncan**



No panic on the Grange bench as their men power forward.  
Picture ***Nigel Duncan***