

Imrie's men out to tame Wildcats

The University of Edinburgh face a tough weekend which could define their season, entertaining fellow title-challengers, Western Wildcats, on Saturday before travelling to ambitious Uddingston on Sunday.

Western are second in the table with 21 points from eight fixtures while the university combine are third with 18 points from seven games. However, coach Hamish Imrie and his Edinburgh side are the joint top scorers in the competition with Western. Both teams have scored 36 goals.

Western have conceded 12 and the students ten but Imrie's men have a game in hand. They played in midweek in the British Universities and Colleges Sport (BUCS) and coach Imrie will make a late selection.

Rob Harwood, Western's skipper, said that Hamish Galt, Andrew Lochrin and Luc Hermesen are sidelined but Andrew McConnell is back and he said: "We really found our form against Watsonians last weekend, playing some excellent hockey and scoring a number of goals.

"Playing Edinburgh University away is always tough but we will be going in with a lot of confidence from last weekend and look to finish the first half of the season strongly."

Grange remain in pole position and they have 24 points from their eight games having scored 33 goals and let in only seven. They netted seven against Capital rivals Erskine Stewart's Melville (ESM) last weekend and it could have been more.

There is a major injury doubt about Robbie Croll as he left the field against ESM with a shoulder problem and Grange are at home to FSEG Clydesdale on Saturday.

Steve Grubb, Grange's coach, said that training has focused on increasing their goal conversion rate and he added: "We have created a lot of opportunities so far this season and have started to see them turn into goals, however, there is always room for improvement."

Inconsistent Watsonians, who are fourth having only won two of their last five games, host bottom club Kelburne who have only won one game this season, while sixth-placed Inverleith, who have one win and two draws to their credit in their last five starts, travel to Dalnacraig to meet Dundee Wanderers who are ninth in the 12-strong league. The Tayside team have one win and a draw in their last five but the Edinburgh side have recruited four new players, Jack Kinloch, Jordan Wright, Kit Mackenzie and Jesse Drake.

Struggling Erskine Stewart's Melville, who are second bottom, visit mid-table Hillhead who are seventh and the Edinburgh side hope to have more players back after being forced to field an under-strength squad against Grange.

Moving to the women's Premiership, Watsonian women, the champions, host second-bottom Hillhead on Saturday newcomer Genevieve Hussell should be available.

Coach Keith Smith said she has seen our here eligibility period since moving to Edinburgh from abroad and she most recently played in Australia but previously played for Loughborough and White Star in Belgium.

Glasgow-based Hillhead have yet to register a point this term after five outings, while second-placed Western Wildcats, who are three points adrift of the Edinburgh club, are at eighth-placed University of St Andrews.

Grange Edinburgh Ladies, who are third, visit Uddingston who are sixth and both clubs have three wins in their last five games while The University of Edinburgh are at home to struggling city rivals Inverleith who are tenth in the table with one point from four starts. The students have 13 points from six games and are fourth.

FIXTURES: November 4: Men's Premiership: The University of Edinburgh v Western Wildcats (13.25, Peffermill; Watsonians v Kelburne; Grange v FSEG Clydesdale (noon, Fettes Playing Fields); Uddingston v Grove Menzieshill (15.00, Uddingston Cricket and Sports Club); Dundee Wanderers v Inverleith (15.30, Dalnacraig); Hillhead v Erskine Stewart's Melville (15.30, Upper Windyedge). November 5: Uddingston v The University of Edinburgh (12.30, Uddingston Cricket and Sports Club); FSEG Clydesdale v Erskine Stewart's Melville (13.30, Titwood).

Women's Premiership: November 4: Glasgow University v GHK; Gordonians v Clydesdale Western; Watsonians v Hillhead; University of St Andrews v Western Wildcats; The University of Edinburgh v Inverleith (15.30, Peffermill); Uddingston v Grange Edinburgh Ladies (16.30, Uddingston Cricket and Sports Club).

PICTURE: Action from ESM v Grange last Saturday. Picture **Nigel Duncan**