

Musselburgh Rugby – Shield winners are the real deal

For students of Scottish rugby it has been obvious for a while that Musselburgh are a club on the up.

Travelling to Premiership leaders Marr at the weekend and not only taking full points but depriving them of the coveted Bill McLaren Shield is, according to club president Brian Jardine, final tangible proof that 'burgh are now a force to be reckoned with.

“Something like this has been coming since halfway through last season” says Jardine, adding:

“It took a wee while for a new coaching team comprising Derek Riordan, Andrew Clark and Calum Gauld to make their mark but a good run of results culminated in that win at Marr.”

From escaping relegation by the skin of their teeth in 2022-23 helped by ending the campaign with a “hat-trick” of victories 'burgh have lost a mere five out of 14 games in this calendar year and are averaging a fraction under 30 points per match this campaign.

The most satisfying performance is probably the win to claim the Bill McLaren Shield.

Commemorating the late, much lamented, broadcaster, if the Shield is hard to acquire it is even harder for a club to have their name added to it as the requirement is four successive home wins.

They are under no illusions that will be tough with Jed,

Selkirk, Hawick and Edinburgh Accies on the schedule.

At least 'burgh, up to fourth in the table, have an away fixture at Kelso on Saturday to prepare themselves before the four home game challenge starts with a visit from Edinburgh Accies.

Captained by centre Rory Watt whose brother, Sandy, is a prolific try scorer out on the wing, Musselburgh have just been boosted by the return of classy ex-age group internationalist Mike Maltman after two years out with a shoulder injury.

But as one door opens ... Robert Stott, a key figure in the club's rise, is about to go under the knife for a shoulder problem!

President Jardine is confident 'burgh are well place to cope as there is real depth in the ranks.

"We now run 4 x 15's including a colts" he says.

Forward planning doesn't end there either as work has started on preparing for a Musselburgh Women's team to take the field.

"It won't happen overnight but we have started midweek training sessions under one of our players, James Ferguson, and up to 17 have attended so far.

"If things keep going in the right direction we will be well placed to test the water at summer seven-a-side tournaments and take it from there" says the president.

'burgh are pictured displaying the Bill McLaren Shield after their 36-28 win at Marr during which they had the four try bonus point wrapped up by half-time.

Photo credit: Shona Stott

