

Croll goal and Lothian save keeps Grange in pole position

Grange edged Capital rivals Watsonians to keep their noses in front in the race for the men's Premiership title with one game remaining.

The Stockbridge combine won 1-0 thanks to an open play goal just before half-time from Robbie Croll and a key save by Calum Lothian from a Dan Coultas drag flick following a penalty corner in the dying seconds.

Stevie Grubb, Grange's coach, said: "Watsonians set up to sit deep and try to play on the break and we dominated a lot of the game without making a huge number of clear cut opportunities.

"Robbie scored with a well-taken strike, high and to the goalkeeper's left from the top of the D, and we continued to have the majority of the possession but failed to extend our lead.

"A final scramble in our D at the death saw a penalty corner awarded to Watsonians a decision that could easily have been a free hit to Grange.

"Calum saved the resulting drag flick high on the left post from Dan Coultas to secure the three points and maintain our one point lead in the league. We did what we needed to, to keep the league title in our own hands."

Second-placed The University of Edinburgh kept up the pressure

with a 4-3 victory over Hillhead, and, in the West of Scotland, Western, who are third, thrashed Uddingston 7-0 at Auchhowie.

Grange have 40 points with the students one adrift and Western on 36 with Uddingston fourth on 19, Watsonians next on 17, the same points as bottom club Hillhead.

Martin Shepherdson, Grange's manager, said his men enjoyed the "better" of the game but couldn't take advantage of that in what he described as a nervy second-half.

He added: "We're obviously happy with the result and now we need to win our last game at home to Uddingston next Saturday (push-off 11am)."

In the bottom section, Grove Menzieshill beat FSEG Clydesdale 4-2 on Tayside with Inverleith dismissing bottom club Kelburne, who are already relegated, 5-2 in Edinburgh.

Dundee Wanderers were held 4-4 by ESM also on Tayside leaving the play-off position in the relegation section also in the balance.

ESM have 13 points from their 15 games and are one behind Grove Menzieshill with Inverleith now moving to 19 points.

Ahead of them are Clydesdale with 20 points and Wanderers with 21. They head the bottom six.

The Scottish Cup semi-finals for the women are on Sunday at Glasgow's National Hockey Centre with Watsonians, the new-crowned Premiership champions, in against Clydesdale Western in the second semi-final at 16.00.

The first game also at Glasgow's National Hockey Centre is at 14.00 and features Western Wildcats v Uddingston.

PICTURE: Western v Grange from our library