

Grange two wins away from Premiership title

Martin Shepherdson beamed as he confirmed that the men's Premiership title chase was back in the hands of Grange just seconds after the final whistle in his club's recent, emphatic 4-0 victory over rivals Western Wildcats at Fettes.

Since then, Grange have played in Europe and also come from 2-0 down to edge Western 3-2 in the semi-final of the Scottish Cup. They are on a high.

The maths are simple. Beat inconsistent Watsonians, who they meet in the Scottish Cup Final later in the season, and then Uddingston and the silverware remains in Grange's clubhouse at Stockbridge.

The odds are in Grange's favour. They beat Watsonians 3-2 earlier in the league campaign but only from a late strike from Aidan McQuade following a penalty corner award.

Watsonians have struggled after the league split but raised their game and came from behind to thrash Kelburne 6-1 in the Scottish Cup semi-final last weekend.

Edinburgh University are in second place only a point behind and ambitious coach Hamish Imrie will urge his men to win their final two games just in case Grange slip-up in the

run-in. Imrie's men entertain Hillhead, who are bottom of the top six, and are in fine form having recently beaten Grange 3-1 in the league.

Western are third and they host fourth-placed Uddingston, a side seeking to cling on to fourth spot in the top six.

Meanwhile, at the other end of the table, Erskine Stewart's Melville (ESM) are vying with Dundee-based Grove Menzieshill to avoid the play-off spot after Kelburne were confirmed as the relegated club.

The Edinburgh side travel to Tayside to face Wanderers and Grove host Clydesdale.

It's Scottish Cup semi-final day for Watsonians, the newly-crowned women's Premiership champions, and they are looking to claim the treble for the second straight year. They play third-placed Clydesdale Western while Western Wildcats, who are fourth in the top six, are on duty against Uddingston who top the bottom six.

PICTURE: David Forrester holds the league title aloft as his squad celebrate last season's title success. Picture **Nigel Duncan**