

Sevens hat-trick gives Wanderers a timely boost

Murrayfield Wanderers coach Ryan James is hopeful that a “hat-trick” of Spring seven-a-side successes can provide much needed momentum going into next season.



Tournament win No 1 for Murrayfield Wanderers was at Penicuik.



Murrayfield Wanderers won the Musselburgh tournament for the first time.

Wanderers dropped out of the National Leagues in 2023-24 but considerable pride was restored by winning sevens tournaments at Penicuik, Musselburgh and Linlithgow.

James said: "It was a pleasant surprise to do so well in sevens after what was a tricky 15-a-side season and we only had a week to prepare for Penicuik where we had triumphed exactly a decade earlier but I always knew we had a core of 10-12 players who could be really useful."

The 15s relegation was not without its frustrations. After winning two of their first three matches some five of the opening nine fixtures were lost by a single score.

Ryan, 33, who is originally from Jedburgh had a five year stint as coach to the Scottish women's Touch team guiding them to second place in European Championships before linking up

with Wanderers. He said: "Considering that going into the season it looked at one point we'd only have a dozen players in our entire squad things could have been worse.

"But the players stuck together and nobody walked away because we were losing. In the end I felt we justified the old adage 'success isn't always about winning and sometimes it is persistence through failure.'

"The sevens season brought a chance to re-set and the confidence provided by the Penicuik win helped us at Musselburgh where we took the trophy for the first time.

"Linlithgow's tournament was their first ever and success for us was particularly welcome ahead of our club dinner that evening."

The two brothers of another Wanderers' coach, Alex Godsmark – Ryan and Niall – were key to the sevens wins.

Niall had also been playing for a team of Scottish veteran all stars and lent valuable experience while Ryan has been playing regularly for a club in Belgium.

Niall earned "player of the tournament" status at Musselburgh while the same accolade was given to centre/stand off Lachlan Lee at Linlithgow.

A season in East Division One now awaits but Wanderers will start pre-season on 16 July determined to bounce back straight back and do justice to outstanding work in the community by development officers which should soon start to pay dividends at senior level.

And there is also the matter of restoring a sevens reputation at a club who, in a previous incarnation as Edinburgh Wanderers – an amalgamation with Murrayfield RFC took place in 1997 – won prestigious tournaments at Melrose (1973) and Amsterdam (1981) as well as featuring in successive finals of

the Middlesex event at Twickenham in 1969 and '71.

- Along with other Edinburgh rugby clubs Wanderers will play in a charity football tournament in aid of Cash4Kids at Meggetland on Friday 7 June.



Wanderers finished their tour-de-force at Linlithgow