

Watsonians edge plucky Inverleith

Watsonians saw off a spirited and enthusiastic Inverleith side to claim their second straight win of the new campaign and take their total goal tally to ten with only one in reply, an impressive start.

The 3-1 victory over their Capital neighbours at The Mary Erskine School, who had eight under-18 players in their 17-strong squad, was also achieved without player/coach Dan Coultas, a former Great Britain squad player, and Tom Swarbrick, one of their long-standing players.

Two of their goals came following penalty corner awards and the other from open play and the platform was a 2-0 lead after 20 minutes, a period in which they enjoyed the major share of possession.

Plucky Inverleith pulled a goal back after 23 minutes from a breakaway down the right, but they were undone when Watsonians claimed their third a minute later, a goal which deflated the developing young team.

They, however, struck admirably to their task and Swarbrick, who has a hamstring injury, sportingly praised their opposition and said: "Yes, we are happy with the win and six points, but we have to sharpen up our finishing."

Euan Burgess celebrated hugely, arms aloft, after opening the scoring in 14 minutes from a penalty corner and Danny Cain

added No 2, also from a penalty corner, six minutes later, but Inverleith, with hard-working, Scotland under-21 international, Charlie Jack, heavily involved, hit back through Thomas Temperley who neatly finished off a darting move down the right to get The Purple back into the game.

Their joy was short lived when Mathew Leiper netted from open play, deflecting the ball home following a ball driven down the middle of the pitch from just outside the 23 from Craig Yelland, for No 3.

Scottish international, Duncan Riddell, restored to the side after missing the opening fixture due to a family wedding, hit a post from close in and Watsonians had other chances including one which Ronan Kingsbury put wide from close in, underlining Swarbrick's point.

Stuart Neave, one of Inverleith's backroom staff, said this was a much-improved performance from their opening game which they lost 7-1 at Uddingston, and he added: "We competed well against a good, well-organised Watsonians team.

"We know where we are. We are a young squad with eight, under-18 players, and we have some players injured. We are going in the right direction and we know we conceded goals from penalty corners. Things to work on.

Dundee Wanderers, thrashed 7-0 at Watsonians on opening day, lost 4-0 at home to Western Wildcats and Dunfermline Carnegie, beaten 3-0 at champions, Grange, lost 3-1 at home to Hillhead 2 while FSEG Clydesdale edged Uddingston 1-0 in Glasgow. The University of Edinburgh were held 1-1 at Grove Menzieshill.

Grange got out of jail after scoring twice in the final five minutes to down Capital rivals Erskine Stewart's Melville (ESM) 3-2 at Inverleith in a tight match in which the visitors created more clear-cut chances.

The champions went ahead after 12 minutes through Scottish

international David Nairn but Will Kelly levelled 15 minutes later and Jack Collister converted a penalty stroke to put ESM 2-1 in front after 46 minutes.

It looked bleak for Grange but they battled back and Nairn's second levelled at 2-2 and Dylan Bean stunned the home side with the game-winner with less than ten seconds left.

Watsonians top the table on goal difference as they have six points as do second-placed Western and Grange who are third.

PICTURE: Euan Burgess celebrates opening the scoring for Watsonians v Inverleith at The Mary Erskine School. Picture *Nigel Duncan*





