



SELKIRK RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

Fixture: 1st XV	Musselburgh vs Selkirk (Away) 17th September
Result:	Musselburgh 8 - Selkirk 29

Report from The Offside Line

“SELKIRK extended their unbeaten start to the Tennent’s Premiership campaign with an impressive win that yielded all five league points. Scott Wight’s men had the game won by half-time and, although they failed to score in the second period, were never in danger of losing. A dominant Selkirk scrum deprived the home side of the prime possession that had fuelled a free-scoring start to the season and left Musselburgh still looking to open their account.

The Borderers’ transformation from the stuttering squad that struggled last season is marked, and Wight admits that he is excited to see how far this team can go. “At the moment we are looking for consistency and we’re looking for performances week in, week out,” he said.

“Credit to the boys, they are delivering at the moment. The most exciting thing for us is that James Bett is getting married today and we’re missing seven boys. To come away to Musselburgh, who only got beat by Currie, Marr and Hawick here last year, and we got stuffed by 50 – it’s a big turnaround. “Rugby is like a rollercoaster, you lose, you lose, you lose and it becomes a habit. But then winning becomes a habit too. We’ve had a great start to the season, but we’re not going to get carried away. It’s a pretty grounded group of players and they keep pushing the boundaries”, he noted, pointing to the squad strength that gives him confidence for the coming weeks.

“We were pretty clever in recruiting five or six guys who are first XV players and we have the added benefit of Ryan Godsmark coming home for a six-week placement at the high school, until the October holiday.”

While admitting that his men had eased off in the second half, with the job largely done at the break, Wight was prepared to let that pass, saying, “I’m loving life at the moment and it’s much better on a Saturday when you are picking up results.”

By contrast, his Musselburgh counterpart Derek O’Riordan offered his assessment of the mood in the home dressing room, saying, “There’s an admission that we came off second best because we allowed ourselves to be bullied in the first half. You stand off against a team like Selkirk and you give them the ascendancy in and around the set piece and you’re going to in for a long afternoon. You couple that with their ability to kick us into areas of the field that we struggled to get out of, then they’ve pretty much schooled us in terms of how to play with the wind behind your back.”

Selkirk’s use of the breeze allowed them to take charge instantly and they had a first-minute scoring opportunity, but Matt Reid was just wide with a penalty effort. Musselburgh were struggling to gain a foothold in the match, and it seemed only a matter of time until the Borderers opened their account. And so it proved, when with eight minutes on the clock, Selkirk won a lineout close to the home line and with a secondary surge, shunted the hosts backwards, with Bruce Riddell claiming the try. Reid converted, then took the points tally into double figures when he slotted a penalty from in front of the sticks.

Musselburgh had bagged try bonuses in each of their previous two matches and it was clear to see why as they attempted to attack at pace, with James Ferguson and Rory Watt posing the biggest threat. However, it was too frantic and their efforts repeatedly came to nothing. That allowed the visitors to use their superiority up front to apply further pressure and create a platform to release the bristling pace in the backs.

An error by the home side gifted Selkirk another score. Scott McClymont was quickest to gather a spilled ball which was swept wide to Godsmark who drew the last man and freed Lachlan Ferguson who darted over, with Reid converting for a 17-point lead.

Danny Owenson clawed back three points when he banged over a penalty, but Selkirk responded with another score when they disrupted a home scrum and Ross Nixon picked up the pieces to sprint through a gap.

The chase was on for the bonus-point score and it came just before half-time after a short throw to the front of a lineout was driven by Luke Pettie, who smuggled the ball out to McClymont and he finished the job. Reid’s conversion sent Selkirk in at the interval with a 29-3 lead.

A front-row reshuffle by Musselburgh stabilised the scrum and some of the passes that had gone to ground in the first period started to stick, but the hosts failed to find a way through a solid Selkirk defence. Danny Owenson did manage to cross the whitewash but he was held up by his opposite number Jack Hamilton.

Reid was off target with a penalty attempt on Selkirk, and the only points of the second half came with the final play when Owenson fired out a long pass to Calum Marshall, who sent Cameron Pryde over for an unconverted score that was scant consolation for the disappointed hosts.”