

## Currie Chieftains v Selkirk

**DON'T pay much attention to the scoreline. Until Selkirk had the heart ripped from their backline by injuries and Currie took full advantage with a late flurry of scores, it was a proper, competitive affair. When Selkirk brought the scoreline back to 21-17 going into the last quarter, they were threatening an upset. Instead the disruptions hit home and four home tries in the final stages put the game to bed.**

For Currie, it was exactly the match they needed ahead of next week's Premiership semi-final against Edinburgh Accies; for Selkirk a low note to finish a campaign which had promised more, only to falter when it really mattered.

Not that **Mark Cairns**, the home coach, was taking too much from the game. "There'll be a different external pressure next week," he admitted. "But both this game, with no external pressure, and next week, with tons, required us to be thinking about our own game and, making clear decisions. We did a lot of that in this game and there was a lot of good, good effort going on.

"Having not played for a few weeks, there were a few mistakes as well, but I was really pleased overall with how we played.

"When we win that advantage line, and we suck teams in, we are dangerous on the outside. We managed to get hands free and get some balls in behind and we looked dangerous. Sometimes, though, we were forcing things in the first half before we had won that gainline battle. The second half, we got that balance better.

"Having been out a few weeks without a game, it was always going to be a bit messy. There are things we can do in training to combat what Accies will bring but it is a good stepping stone."

For his opposite number, **Scott Wight**, it was another frustrating afternoon to wind up his final Premiership campaign at Selkirk before moving on to the Super6 and a new role at Southern Knights. There were glimpses of how well the side could play, but ultimately, they were undone, partly by their own mistakes.

"Credit to the boys who played here and fronted up," he said. "I don't think the scoreline reflects the game. We brought it back to 21-17 but we had so many injuries, and not just any players but key players who make a difference."



They were hindered by the loss of **Craig Jackson**, the experienced fly-half, to an arm injury early on, and then also lost **Aaron McColm** and **Ryan Cottrell**, the starting centres, in the final quarter. The loss of the entire starting midfield was ruthlessly exposed.

“It’s been frustrating,” Wight added. “We had chances, but we have struggled a bit since Christmas and that has been a huge part of it. We changed the front-row and did get better in the tight and were starting to build momentum, but injuries cost us.”

In fact, Selkirk had had the better start and reaped an early reward with wing **Ethan McVicar**, who never stopped working hard for his team, making it to the line after the forwards had made space.



Currie hit straight back, though, and levelled the scores with centre **Greg Cannie** finishing a move that started with the forwards taking a tap penalty. That was when **Jamie Forbes**, the Currie fly-half, really hit the accelerator, grabbing two quick scores to put his side in charge. The first came off a long period of pressure up front, the second after **Iain Sim**, the wing, had opened up the defence.

**Cottrell** was always a threat for Selkirk and cut the deficit with a try just before half time, and with the Borders pack starting to get on top in the tight after the break, they were right back in the match when full-back Finlay Wheelans dotted down after some brilliant handling, in particular a tip-on from Cottrell, put him clear.



Just when it looked as though there might be a fighting comeback for Selkirk, the wheels came off as Currie replied with an equally good try from the kick-off, replacement scrum half **Paddy Boyer**, providing the key break and **Ewan Stewart**, the lock, there to take the final pass and crash over.

With the backs starting to drop like flies, there was no way back for Selkirk as Currie went up through the gears, finding space to run in three closing tries as they started to show off their handling. **Ryan Daley**, who had come on at full-back, finished the first of the trio after Forbes had made the break, and then Sim and **Kody McGovern**, the two wings, both found space on the outside to finish with a flourish.

For Wight, it was an unfortunate note to finish his Premiership spell with Selkirk on, though he insists the season is far from over with a Border League final and Scottish Cup games to come.

"I've thoroughly enjoyed my time here, I would not be going if it was not to a bigger job to challenge myself at Super6 level," he said. "It was a hard few years for the club, we were struggling but were starting to come out of that and then Covid hit, which was a unique experience as we had to train in groups of four on three separate pitches.

"It has been nightly rewarding. I'm sure the club is now ready to move on under the new coaching set-up. It is in a good place."

### **Teams -**

**Currie Chieftains:** J McCaig; K McGovern, DJ Innes, G Cannie, I Sim; J Forbes, G Christie; C Anderson, R Stewart, C Ramsay, W Inglis, E Stewart, A McCallum, G Nelson, R Davies©. Subs: J Drummond, J Ramsay, M Vernel, P Boyer, R Daley.

**Selkirk:** F Wheelans; L Ferguson, R Cottrell, Aaron McColm©, E McVicar; C Jackson, J Hamilton; L Pettie©, J Bett, B Riddell, C Ward, J Head, R Nixon, S McClymont, Andrew McColm. Subs: Z Szwagrzak, C Mackintosh, A Cochrane, C Turnbull, C Easson.

Report by The Offside Line

Photographs by Grant Kinghorn