

Melrose Storm v Selkirk 'A' 13.10.23

The passing of Melrose stalwart and Past President Jack Dun on Wednesday saw the flag at the Greenyards lowered to half-mast on Friday evening for the Border Junior League match between Melrose Storm and Selkirk 'A' and it was fitting that the game produced some quality tries in an entertaining match which resulted in the home team claiming full points with a 33-14 win over Selkirk. An early injury to Selkirk prop Stuart Henry with a suspected achilles injury resulted in uncontested scrums throughout the 80 minutes. And it was from set piece that Storm created their first chance of points on the board as Jack Wilks galloped in for the opening try with Scott Clark adding the extras to take the lead after 16 minutes 7-0. A further try by Melrose increased their lead to 12-0. But the Souters fought back, with Robert Cook, back from illness, instrumental in the build-up. Scrum half Hugo Alderson kept the pack moving and when the ball was fed to Sam Clark there was no stopping him from 5 metres out and the hooker touched down between the sticks to give Cameron Easson the chance to take the easy extras to bring back the score to 12-7. Easson had the chance of 3 points when Melrose were adjudged to be offside, but his penalty kick fell short from 30 metres out. However, as half time approached it was the Souters who had the majority of the possession but seemed just unable to unlock a well drilled 'Rose defence. And against the run of play Melrose took their chance, and with some poor tackling displayed by the Philiphaugh men, Melrose went over once more to increase their lead with a converted try to take the half time lead 19-7. From the kick off the Souters once again kept ball well with Guy Mallin and Calum Findlater working tirelessly, both playing out of position in the forwards. And their hard work was rewarded when Blake Cullen fielded the ball in his own half and saw space up the right hand side to take off and leave the defence in his wake. He fed Nathaniel Armstrong on his shoulder who powered his way over in the corner to score a sensational try for the visitors. A tricky conversion was put between the uprights by Easson to close the gap to 19-14. A further break by Armstrong once again created a scoring opportunity but Easson was unable to collect the pass and the chance went begging. With both teams willing to play expansive rugby it wasn't too long before another try was to come along. And it was the Greenyards outfit who gained their bonus point with 65 minutes on the clock with a converted try taking the score to 26-14. But it was Selkirk who nearly scored the try of the season when Cook, Mallin and Findlater combined to tear up the middle of the pitch. Alderson then fed Findlater who just couldn't control the ball and the opportunity was lost on the line. With time running out ex Selkirk player Davie Reive was introduced to the fray. But tiring bodies just couldn't stop a further try by the home team and the game finished 33-14. Another disappointing result, however many plus points from an entertaining match which pleased the assembled crowd on a cool October evening. Archie Penman covered the pitch well with some sublime cover tackles, along with Blake and brother Fraser both contributing well in a workman like back line performance, with Finn Mallin coping admirably out of position on the wing. In the pack, Rhuariadh MacKessack-Leitch defied his age by putting in the miles, with captain Liam Cassidy keeping his troops in the hunt from beginning to end.

Report by Bryan Hoggan