

## Selkirk v Heriot's Blues 14.10.23

**HERIOT'S BLUES** bounced back from the previous week's disappointment with a five-point haul from a keenly contested encounter. Selkirk were left to rue their lack of a cutting edge after enjoying plenty of possession and creating enough chances to win, but failing to finish them off.

"We're obviously happy to come here and get five points," said Heriot's assistant **Jamie Parker**, whose team had lost narrowly to Musselburgh seven days earlier. "We have a young squad and at half-time it was anybody's game and I thought it was going to be tough going against the wind. But we kept the ball and defended really well, so I'm happy with that. As a group we just keep getting a wee bit better and a wee bit better, and we'll just see how we cope with the challenges that lie ahead."

**Gordon Henderson** in the Selkirk camp sees reasons for optimism in what is his first season at the helm, and he knows the areas that require attention if his squad is to continue making progress. "We played some really good rugby in the first half and had a couple of good scores. But we let them back in the game. We made some crucial basic errors and Heriot's took advantage of that and scored a couple of tries, as Heriot's do – they're a good running side. The game just fell away from us. We just didn't show enough composure at times. We need to look at ourselves again and move forward then get a response against Edinburgh Accies next week."



Selkirk's shortcomings were evident in the early stages of the match as they made a solid start with a multi-phase effort that blew away the cobwebs but failed to produce any scoring threat. The hosts continued to enjoy the territorial advantage but a couple of wayward kicks handed the initiative to their opponents who built some momentum but also failed to find a way through.

Selkirk lost **Andrew Grant-Suttie** and **Ryan Legge** to injury before the first quarter was up, but the home side resumed control. **Callum Turnbull** was held up over the line, but the breakthrough was only briefly delayed. The Borderers decided not to kick a penalty in front of the posts, and the decision to opt for a scrum paid off when **Scott McClymont** plunged over to give Selkirk a lead they merited at that stage.

Heriot's looked for an instant response and had their best spell of the half. Selkirk's defence held firm, but their efforts were not entirely legal, and **Andrew McColm** was despatched to the sin bin for a side entry and collapsing the maul. The visitors took advantage of the extra man when **Malachy Keough** sent a looping pass to **Paul Christie** who was in space and raced over to tie the scores.



Selkirk regained the lead following a slick break that ended with **Aaron McColm** freeing **Ben Pickles** to dot down. But that lead was short-lived and Heriot's went in at the interval with a two-point lead. **Kenta Kutsuna** stretched the Selkirk defence with a mazy run and the ball was moved wide to **John McNaughton** who sprinted over and left Kutsuna to land the conversion that sent the visitors in at half time with their noses in front.

Selkirk dominated possession in the early part of the second period, but failed to threaten the line and it was Heriot's who came closest to adding to their tally before McNaughton was shunted into touch just short of the target.

The Heriot's winger was then pipped in a race to the line after a Selkirk spillage and kick ahead, but the tide had turned and a third try for the visitors came after an hour. **Rory Kirkpatrick** made the dent and flipped the ball to **Luke Townsend**, whose clever pass freed **Trent Storen** for the five points, which grew to seven when Kutsuna landed the conversion.

Selkirk continued to have most of the possession, but lacked the cutting edge to make anything of it, and even when **Bruce Riddell** did make it over the whitewash, he was held up.



The hosts moved into bonus-point territory when they opted to go for goal with a penalty in 70 minutes – Aaron McColm’s successful effort taking them to within six points. However, Heriot’s responded immediately and **Keir Singleton** broke from deep, then a couple of phases later, Kirkpatrick crashed over for the bonus-point try, with Kutsuna’s conversion concluding the scoring.

#### Teams –

**Selkirk:** C Anderson; B Pickles, A Grant-Suttie, R Nixon, F Wheelans; Aaron McColm, R Legge; L Pettie, B Riddell, J Millburn, A Cochrane, C Turnbull, J Turnbull, S McClymont©, Andrew McColm. Subs: F Easson, Z Szwagrzak, C Ward, J Beveridge, B Cullen.

**Heriot’s Blues:** A Hunter; P Christie, B Kay©, T Storen, J McNaughton; K Kutsuna, K Singleton; A Munro, R Jackson, J Lacelles, N Docherty, M Keough, R Kirkpatrick, I Hill, A Johnston. Subs: D Dineen, A Bogle, P Spence, L Townsend, C Meager.

Report by The Offside Line

Photos by Grant Kinghorn