

Murrayfield Wanderers 12 – 26 West

West went East to play old acquaintances Murrayfield Wanderers. This was the third match-up between the clubs this season as they met in the Cup. Wanderers have improved in form since then so it wasn't necessarily going to be easy. The match was played at their new home Roseburn Park, in the shadow of BT Murrayfield's North stand, but the connection with the SRU has now been broken. A new clubhouse is planned but in the meantime West were hosted at Murrayfield ice rink so it was not totally a traditional rugby atmosphere.

The new pitches are level and firm, and conditions were good for running rugby other than a stiff breeze. Both teams have fast backs and that was how it turned out, fast and furious play leading to a very entertaining match.



Murrayfield started at a furious pace but a good West defence mopped up the pressure before the West forwards took control of the game. A driving maul went forwards 15 metres before good passing and spin offloads eventually found Dru Nicholson in the clear. He touched down under the posts and converted his own try.

Harry Brewster was injured early on, Alexander Fiskén moving to scrum half, Mark Sim slotting in on the wing and the switch proved significant.

An excellent West passing move found an overlap and Mark Sim scored in the corner, Dru Nicholson landing the difficult conversion and West led 0-14. Murrayfield pressed the West defence but an excellent breakout from Calum Booth saw him streak over. The conversion was missed but West went in 0-19 up at half time.

West nearly got the bonus point after the break when an interception nearly reached the line but Murrayfield secured a turnover.

The home side got a deserved score when they found an overlap and winger Benjamin Brown scored, the conversion hitting the post. Matters were much more even in the second half and Wanderers scored another try when hooker Kieran Gibbons touched down after a series of pick and drives, Lachlan Lee converting.

West really needed the bonus point for their promotion push but Murrayfield managed to defend successfully until Mark Sim managed an interception, chipped forward, collected his own kick and touched down at speed. The bonus was in the bag and Dru Nicholson converted to make the final score 12-26.



West are now 3rd in the league, 5 points behind Newton Stewart, who they play away in a fortnight's time. That and the penultimate game against 4th place Ardrossan could well decide promotion and it's all going down to the wire.

West team: 1. Peter Rhodes, 2 Hamish Clark, 3. Andy Love, 4. James Harley, 5. Kieran Grant, 6. Max Bowie, 7. Craig McCall, 8. Marc Zoma, 9. Harry Brewster, 10. Dru Nicholson, 11. Calum Booth, 12. Nicky Sutcliffe, 13. Gareth Hokins, 14. Alexander Fiskin, 15. Mikey Heron.
Subs 16. Donald Morrison, 17. Dylan Dawson, 18. Euan Wallace, 19 Mark Sim.