

Newton Stewart 36-7 West.

West travelled nearly as far South as is possible in Scotland to play 2nd place Newton Stewart. The winner would be in pole position for promotion.

It was the first match on Newton Stewart's new pitch, the ground being beside the picturesque Bladnoch distillery. Conditions were far from idyllic however, with strong Southerly winds bending the goalposts and making kicking, passing and lineouts very difficult.



The home side started best, their no. 8 breaking through the West defence and finding flanker Mark McCornick who scored under the posts. The wind was so extreme that the conversion blew back 180 degrees to the kicker but West were 5 down already.

Neither side could make much in the howling gale but it was Newton Stewart who increased their lead when a passing move off a scrum saw lock Alan Ferrie score. Jack Gaw managed to convert and it was 12-0 at half time.

West worked out how to play the conditions when a series of powerful pick & drives went $\frac{3}{4}$ the length of the pitch before Newton Stewart held it up illegally and West were awarded a penalty try. At 12-7 a win looked in reach.

It wasn't to be, with Jack Gaw landing a penalty, before winger Robert Service broke through the West defence to score under the posts. Jack Gaw converted.

Another Newton Stewart breakaway from a lineout saw scrum half Robbie McCornick score, Jack Gaw converting, and they had the bonus in the bag.

West were tiring at the end when no. 8 James Wallace scored off a catch and drive, Jack Gaw adding the extras for a convincing 36-7 win.



West can mathematically reach the 2nd spot in the league, but that would need an impressive Newton Stewart team to slip up which seems unlikely at this stage. West visit old rivals Perthshire in a fortnight's time and West will hope to get back to winning ways.

West team: 1. Michael Kassab, 2 Hamish Clark, 3. Andy Love, 4. Scott Cochrane, 5. James Harley, 6. Kieran Grant, 7. Craig McCall, 8. Marc Zoma, 9. Alexander Fisken, 10. Mark Sim, 11. Dylan Matthews, 12. Nicky Sutcliffe, 13. Gareth Hopkins, 14. Drew Reddie, 15. Lewis Jamieson. Subs 16. Stuart Hendry, 17. Euan Wallace, 18. Robert Osborn