

## A Bad Day at the Office

Facing Stewartry Sirens on their own patch with a full squad to choose from is a difficult task. With an injury-ravaged squad, it would be near impossible and so it proved at Greenlaw on Sunday. It was a heavy defeat for West of Scotland Ladies but they fought until the final whistle despite coach Lindsey Smith having to make full use of her bench as injury replacements rather than as tactical substitutions.

West started poorly when only a superb cover tackle by Eilidh Power prevented a Stewartry try. After only five minutes, they lost lock Ellie Williamson to injury. Ashley Blair, more used to the front row, came on to replace her. While the change was taking place, home stand-off Lisa Ritchie put Stewartry ahead with a simple penalty. Two minutes later, outside centre Phaedra Snailham found a gap in the visitors' defence to go through for her side's first try. Ritchie's successful kick took the lead to double figures. Before the clock had reached ten minutes, Stewartry had made it 17-0. Left wing Brogan Paterson picked up from a ruck near the West line to score. Ritchie was again successful with her kick.

Although Stewartry were playing some good rugby, the nature of some of their play caused concern. Three successive high tackles were ignored by the referee as was their driving up in scrums, a dangerous practice.

West had begun to get into the game without ever really threatening the home line. It was Stewartry who would score again, just past the twenty minutes mark, with Paterson getting her second try of the game, going over in the corner after a scrum in the West 22. Two further tries in four minutes before half time sealed the match for Stewartry and their try bonus point. Lock Clare Dooley set up Claire Manson for the scrum half to score before, right on the whistle, Snailham again found space to reach the line. Both tries were converted by Ritchie. In between the two scores, West lost their other starting second row, Louise Wilson. She, too, was replaced by a front row in Vanessa Reid-Phelps. Half-time 36-0.

Within a minute of the restart, Snailham, outstanding throughout, had completed her hat-trick. Another conversion from Ritchie. This was quickly followed by No 8 Alison Henderson getting on the scoresheet. West finally got the try their commitment deserved. After good link play between backs and forwards. No 8 Alex Love scored, Alexa Smith converting.

Before the end, Henderson scored two further tries, the first of which was converted by Ritchie. West lost full back Amber Johnston after a head knock and the match finished with captain Amanda Paterson carried off. The final score was Stewartry Sirens 60 West of Scotland Ladies 7.

West of Scotland Ladies: Amber Johnston; Eilidh Power, Jade Scott, Alexa Smith, Kim Toland; Caitlin Reilly, Katie Wilson; Natasha Burge, Rachel Morrison, Amy McHenry; Louise Wilson, Ellie Williamson; Amanda Paterson, Hannah Foster-Rain, Alex Love. Replacements: Vanessa Reid-Phelps, Ashley Blair, Shona Garry, Pamela Duffy, Tiia Stevenson-Cook.

