

## **Kelso Ladies 10 West of Scotland Ladies 56.**

West of Scotland Ladies returned from the Borders on Sunday with a well-deserved five points. Kelso's more physical brand of rugby was no match for the fine running game of West. The support play was excellent, evidenced by six of their eight tries being scored by the back row. A superb display of goal kicking by Emily Irving was a highlight. She converted all eight tries.

With Poynder Park declared unfit for play, the match was played on the smaller pitch at Croft Park. This should have been to the advantage of the larger Kelso forwards and they did, indeed, score the first try of the match after ten minutes. The Kelso pack drove over the visitor's line with openside Barbara Watson getting the touch down. West had already suffered a blow with the early loss through injury of influential lock Ciera Campbell. Despite these two early setbacks, West were quickly into the lead with a typical Alex Watson try, the No 8 breaking tackles to reach the line after the visiting forwards had turned over possession in the Kelso 22. Somewhat surprisingly, Kelso regained the lead with a try similar to their first score, loose head Kim McGurk taking the glory on this occasion. There was no panic in the West ranks and they quickly moved in front again when Watson scored her second try of the afternoon after the home defence had defended desperately through numerous phases. Just before half time, a superb break by openside Fi Gassner saw her score under the posts. Irving's third successful conversion gave West a half-time lead of 21-10.

Within two minutes of the restart, Gassner's second try secured the try bonus point. It had also clearly secured the victory as West looked the much fitter side. Blindside Hannah Foster-Rain got in on the try scoring act before Kelso finally received their first yellow card of the day after the latest in a series of high tackles. Kelso going down to fourteen had little impact on the pattern of the game as West had been completely dominant from the restart. Centre Irving added a try to her tally for the afternoon. It would finish at twenty-one points, an excellent return. Kelso had returned to a full complement but for only two minutes before a second yellow card was issued, this time for dissent. Gassner, always a threat with ball in hand, completed her hat-trick before the afternoon was rounded off in style by the try of the afternoon from left wing Lucy Gardner as she left at least six Kelso would be tacklers floundering in her wake.

A fine, confidence boosting victory by West Ladies. Coach Lindsay Smith will be delighted with the performances of those who stepped in to replace some of the regulars who were missing. She would be most happy, too, with the discipline her charges showed throughout. (They did give away some daft penalties, though!)

West Ladies finally have a home game next Sunday, 7 November. The opponents will be Stewartry Sirens with a 12.15 kick-off.