

West Ladies take the points.

Kelso Ladies 10 West of Scotland Ladies 15.

A hugely committed performance by every member of the squad gave West of Scotland Ladies a narrow but deserved win in their National Plate group match at Kelso. After the gales and heavy rain of the previous few days, the Borders sunshine and no more than a stiffish crosswind were welcomed. Unfortunately, the main pitch at Poynder Park was declared unplayable. The fixture was moved to the nearby public pitch. Its narrow confines would be to the advantage of the home side, the more mobile West side having enjoyed the open spaces of Poynder Park in their comfortable win in the promotion play-off match in December.

From the start, West played some excellent rugby, every player looking comfortable with ball in hand. It was no surprise when they got their reward after twenty minutes with full back Eilidh Power running in her side's first try of the day after a sustained spell of pressure. The conversion was missed as all were on a most difficult day for kickers. Three minutes later, wing Beth Brophy doubled West's lead with another unconverted try.

The home side began to make use of their physical advantage, their large forwards driving at the West defence, gaining ground. It was no surprise when they eventually pulled a try back, the forward drive opening space for left wing Kat Macey to go over. Her pace was a threat throughout. At half time West had a narrow lead, ten points to five.

Kelso started the second half as they had finished the first and soon drew level. The Burnbrae girls had a battle on their hands knowing a win would put them in a good position to qualify for the quarter-finals. The next fifteen minutes saw Kelso dominate but their opponent's defence held firm. Slowly but surely, the Burnbrae side began to make more progress going forward.

Just before the hour mark, West regained the lead. Good support play saw the ball recycled through a number of phases before No 8 Alex Watson's determined break for the line saw her go over. West now looked for the fourth try that would give them the bonus point and seal victory. A try for Kelso would mean a draw and possibly a win if converted. With space at a premium, though, neither line was really threatened. The one chance that did come fell to Kelso. Scrum half Borthwick broke towards the West 22 with the pace of Macey outside her in support. A try looked very much on until full back Power appeared from nowhere and halted Borthwick in her tracks. The quietly spoken full back looked almost embarrassed as she received the plaudits of her teammates. The tackle was every bit as valuable as her try. That was the last real action of the game. No Side Kelso Ladies 10pts West of Scotland Ladies 15pts. West have one group match to play, at home to Kirkcaldy Ladies next Sunday. They are very much on course for the quarter-finals.

Many thanks to Kelso for their usual excellent post-match hospitality. The highlight of the communal singing on the bus on the way home was a rendition of that delightful and soothing Chris de Burgh ballad, "Lady in Red". The quality of the singing may not have been up to much but it did at least drown out the moaning of the coach about not being offered Coronation Chicken with her baked potato.