

West Ladies finish with a win

West of Scotland Ladies finished off their first season in the National League with another convincing win, defeating Howe Harlequins 42-12, scoring eight tries in the process. With No 8 Alex Watson absent, Erinn Foley moved into the back row with Ellie Williamson and Anna Campbell locking the scrum.

West had the advantage of the wind but it was Howe who started the stronger side. The match between the sides at Duffus Park last month had been a tight affair with West's winning margin being only ten points. On this occasion, the visitors were first on the board, openside Claire Macpherson scoring from a quickly taken tap penalty five metres from the home line. West were soon level, centre Alexa Smith finishing off good work by the backs. Despite the score, Howe continued to look the sharper side. It was no surprise when Kelle Nicol timed her run brilliantly to come into the line, take possession and score. The full back, who impressed throughout, converted to give her side a seven points lead.

It was an even game for the next ten minutes but in a remarkable six minutes spell either side of half-time, West took the game away from their opponents. Scrum half Caitlin Reilly made a superb break, found flankers Fi Gassner and Amanda Paterson in support before Foley appeared to finish off an excellent piece of play. Three minutes later, Smith broke from halfway, was held up just short but found her centre partner Jade Scott on hand to score. Right on the interval, Rachel Millar scored in the corner. If she hadn't touched the ball down, the referee would surely have awarded a penalty try and a yellow card for a high tackle. West led 20-12 at the interval.

Almost from the restart, West increased their lead. Another powerful break by Foley saw skipper Eilidh Power on her shoulder to score. Aimee Watson was next on the scoresheet with a fine solo try. Rachel Pryde did come close to narrowing the gap but Power did brilliantly to tackle and hold her up over the line. West's response was two further tries in the closing moments, through Gassner and Paterson. Smith converted the first of these.

It was a great way to finish off a fine league campaign, securing third place. Another eight tries were registered, Shona Garry made her first appearance. A good game in dreadful weather. Next Sunday, West travel to Bridgehaugh to face Premiership Stirling County in the first of their Sarah Beaney Cup group games.