

On a glorious sunny afternoon, a large crowd gathered at Carleton Park where Glenrothes Rugby Club entertained Crieff and Starthearn on Saturday for their last league game of the season. Having started the campaign well, things have not gone so well as the season progressed, so the Glens were looking to at least end on a high.

The game got off to the worst possible start as Crieff scored in their first meaningful attack. Their scrum half, who was lively all game, found a big hole in the Reds defence and went close before off loading for a supporting player to score in the right corner. The conversion was unsuccessful.

Glenrothes struck back quickly. A penalty on the Glens 10m line was put into touch 30m from the visitors' line. The ball was won at the front of the line and Kobi Meldrum took off up the left wing with Lee Gartshore on his shoulder. The hooker chose not to use his captain and went on to score an excellent try. Shaun Gray converted to give the Glens an early lead.

Meldrum was also the scorer of the Glens second try. With the home team on attack, Gray put a kick across the park which was marked by a defender but the referee called play back for a penalty to the right of the Crieff posts. Gartshore took a tap and passed to Meldrum who powered over. Gray converted.

There were no more scores in the first half though both sides went close. Crieff were penalised for holding on to the ball after a tackle, inches from the Glens line, and the half closed with a concerted attack by the Reds culminating in a missed penalty kick with the last play of the half.

Crieff had opened the scoring in the first half and they did the same in the second period after a period of sustained pressure. Initially the home team tackled well but Crieff retained possession well and when they did eventually break a tackle they were able to force their way over the goal line near the posts. The conversion brought the visitors within two points at 14-12.

The Glens restart was allowed to bounce and Crieff found themselves under pressure. They tried to run the ball out of their defensive area but were forced back and eventually carried the ball over their line to give Glenrothes a 5m scrum. Gartshore held the ball at the base of the scrum and when he released it Darrien Kerr passed towards Gray but unfortunately hit the official so the scrum was reset. This time the ball was released more quickly and went from Kerr to Gray to Cooper McKinlay who rounded his opposite number before crossing the goal line and running behind the posts to touch down. Gray converted.

Despite a lot of huffing and puffing from both sides there was no more scoring allowing the Glens to end their season with a 21-12 victory and finishing in sixth position. Gray ensured that much of the play took place in Crieff's end of the pitch with a series of well judged kicks.

If Glenrothes could have fielded this team regularly throughout the season it seems likely that they could have been higher up the league. More players training together regularly would also help as would holding on to a coach. The forwards all carried the ball well with Meldrum Gartshore, Robbie Westwood and man of the match Matt Clowes being outstanding. There is pace in the backline in Kerr, Gray, McKinlay and David Methven but sometimes the decision making is not all it could be. All in all this was a suitable end to the season and all eyes will now be on plans for next year.

