



## PENGUIN INTERNATIONAL RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

Rugby Football Union  
Kent County RFU

### **SMRFC& ESMS Community Inclusive Sport Initiative** **Mary Erskine School, Ravelston, Edinburgh, 8<sup>th</sup> June 2025**

*Report by Nick Penny & Craig Brown*

Stewarts Melville RFC and Erskine Stewarts Melville School hosted a Community Inclusive Multi-Sports Day on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> June, at Mary Erskine School, Ravelston, Edinburgh. The event lasted 3.5 hours.

The event is all about engaging with families with special needs children and their siblings – ages 4 to 14. The principal aim is to engage with the special needs children separately to their siblings, so that all have a full programme of participation in the sports they enjoy, and the opportunity to try new sports and activities.

Stewarts Melville RFC members, and Erskine Stewarts Melville school pupils, ran the different sports, and engaged with the children. The sports available were: rugby, basketball, football, hockey, badminton, cricket, boccia and the obstacle course.

Each participant received an event t-shirt, and after the morning's activities, lunch was served.

55 children plus parents attended. Facilitating and supporting the day were 75 fully-trained volunteers from Stewarts Melville RFC and Erskine Stewarts Melville School. Also joining the volunteers were Penguin Charity Trustee and Scotland 7s player, Nick Penny, and Edinburgh and Scotland 7s & A player and professional coach, Roddy Grant.

In addition to t-shirts and a nutritional lunch, parents were able to relax in the school common room, and enjoy tea or coffee safe in the knowledge that their children were being well looked after. A quiet place for the parents is a crucial part of these events. It also allows them to network and share experiences with each other, which is essential in finding appropriate support for their children.

This event was sponsored by the Penguin Rugby Charity. This is the third time the Penguin Rugby Charity has sponsored this event, having done so on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2023 and 9<sup>th</sup> June 2024. The sponsorship financed lunch, t-shirts, administration costs, and the special training provided by Scottish Disability Sports.



**Quote** from Jason Conlin, President Stewarts Melville RFC

*Stew Mel RFC are indebted to Penguin Rugby for their continued charitable funding. The nature of these events requires meticulous planning, training of volunteers as well as organising facilities and support from other community clubs. With this continuity of support, we can plan ahead and develop the programme further, so we provide the most rewarding experience possible for all.*

*There are no organised multi-sports events for children with additional needs so it's crucial as a community club that we work with our supporters to provide challenging, safe, and fun activities for these most deserving of children. Continuity is crucial in these children's lives so over the last 3 years they have grown to know us personally and relaxed in to having the most fantastic time possible. Having regular contact with the parents also allows them to trust us with the special care we provide and gives them the time and space to chill out for a few hours.*



## ABOUT THE EVENT

Stewart's Melville Rugby Football Club and Erskine Stewart's Melville Schools will be hosting our biggest event yet!! An inclusive multi-sport programme of fun activities - indoor and outdoor this time - for children with any disability or additional need, ages 4-14. Siblings are very welcome to join!

Adapted activities in hockey, cricket, rugby, football, target games and athletics. Support is provided by Sports Leaders from the Mary Erskine School on a one-to-one basis. Parents can participate with their children.

A buffet lunch will be provided for all children and parents, served from 12-1pm

This event is Sponsored by:

THE PENGUIN INTERNATIONAL RFC

CHARITABLE TRUST



LOCATION

The Mary Erskine School - PE Hall  
Ravelston Dykes Road, EH4 3NT


Booking is essential! To book your child's place, please contact:

 [lindseygeddes@live.com](mailto:lindseygeddes@live.com)  
 [jason.conlin@live.co.uk](mailto:jason.conlin@live.co.uk)

## Timings:

- 9.45AM ARRIVAL, ORIENTATION AND FREE T-SHIRT
- 10-11.45AM WARM UP AND ACTIVITY STATIONS
- 12-1PM LUNCH



 <https://stewmelrugby.com>

 <https://www.esms.org.uk/>

**Quote** from Nick Penny, Penguin International Rugby Football Trust Trustee.

*It was a pleasure to represent the Penguin International Rugby Football Club Charitable Trust at the recent inclusive activity day sponsored by ESMS Schools, and Stewarts Melville RFC for children with additional support needs. These activity days create a safe and enjoyable environment for the children to have fun while providing much-needed respite for their parents.*

*The sessions ran for about three hours, during which the children engaged in multi-sport activities while their parents enjoyed some quiet time with a cup of tea and a biscuit. After the activities concluded, everyone was treated to a healthy lunch. The children, aged between 4 and 16 years old, have a variety of additional support needs. The activities were supported by pupils and teachers from the ESMS schools in Edinburgh, and members of the Stewart Melville rugby, cricket, and hockey clubs.*

*The feedback from these events has been incredibly humbling, and is a testament to the hard work and organisation put into making these days a success, with Jason Conlin being the driving force behind it all. This was the third Inclusive Community Day that the PIRFC Charitable Trust has supported, allowing us to contribute to an incredible initiative in the UK for young people and their families who need extra support.*

*It is a privilege to have the opportunity to be a part of these wonderful event*





A thank you from one of the parents:

Dear Sir / Madam,

I wanted to write with a big thank you for your very generous sponsorship of Stewarts Melville Rugby Club inclusive sports event in Edinburgh on 9th June.

My 5 year old son has autism and development delays and requires 1 to 1 care. This often means that our eldest son doesn't always have the attention and energy we would ideally like to give him.

I have attended a number of special needs play activities over the years but I have to say that the event you sponsored was by far and away the best we have attended. I was blown away by the attention to detail and care that went into the event. Some of the many highlights were:

- Providing big brother 1 to 1 time with a 'buddy' to enjoy a variety of sports. For the whole 2 hour session he was having great fun exploring new skills and building his confidence. He wasn't 'held back' or limited to activities tailored to my autistic son.
- For my autistic son there were two 'buddies' who helped find activities to play to his strengths. We had great time finding sensory experiences during the session, e.g. balloons, balls, balancing beams, crash mats etc. We were encouraged to do free flow play and enjoy the activities which stimulated his sensory side (vestibular / proprioceptive). There was clearly a lot of thought gone into the activities
- For me, firstly the safety aspect was spot on with all the doors guarded (my son is pretty creative in his frequent efforts to escape!). It was also a big confidence booster for me personally. Normally we only stay at events for 15-20 minutes max but thanks to the energy of the buddies we stayed for the whole session - just amazing. It was also fantastic for me to experience my son being involved in the whole event and has given me a boost which has lasted for the weeks since.

It is great to hear that the Stewarts Melville Rugby Club has ambitious plans to grow the programme because I feel they have a fantastic model that really benefits families of special needs children.

I would be most grateful if you could pass on my thanks to the whole Penguin Rugby team and trustees.

Cheers

Maurice





Photos from the day











*Penguin Rugby Charity Trustee Nick Penny*

