

## **Orkney 34 v West 36**

West made the long trip north hoping to build on the foundations of a good win last week and came up against an Orkney side showing seven changes from the team that lost to Dumfries in the cup the previous Saturday. Conditions were ideal for open rugby and the spectators were treated to a high scoring free flowing game.

West got off to a poor start and were 12-0 down within 5 mins, Orkney wingers Steve McPhail and Craig Slater both crossing the line however - only one score was converted. West regrouped and went on the offensive their efforts rewarded following good work by Pete Rhodes creating the opportunity for Dylan Matthews to score, the try converted by Dru Nicholson. 12 minutes on the clock. Both sides were probing for any weaknesses but it was West who closed the gap on 22 minutes with a Dru Nicholson penalty 12-10 to the hosts. Both defences were playing well and there was no further scoring in the first half although Orkney were reduced to 14 men just before the halftime whistle for a no arms tackle on centre Fergus Roberston who had to leave the field and may be out for some weeks with a damaged shoulder. West brought on Fraser Brand who moved to the wing with Mark Sim taking over at centre.

Almost straight from the kick off after half time Orkney increased their lead when Graham Poke broke through to touch down. The conversion was missed and Orkney led 17-10. Within 5 mins West had reduced the deficit when Fraser Brand got on the end of a Dru Nicholson pass to touch down out wide and although the conversion was missed West were right back in it - or so we thought. Orkney seized the initiative and by the hour mark had scored a further two tries, both converted, which gave them a 31-15 lead. West came back into the game and Mark Sim jinked his way through the Orkney defence and touched down, Dru Nicholson adding the two points and West had closed the gap to nine points with fifteen minutes to play. Both sides were looking to attack at every opportunity but couldn't find a way through. With eight minutes remaining Orkney won a penalty and took the three points. At this point some West thoughts turned to a 4 try bonus point with the extra losing bonus point added in, however the West players weren't in that mindset and could sense a bit of tiredness creeping in to the Orkney team. West took control and saw attack after attack repelled by some fine Orkney defence. With 3 minutes remaining Mark Sim found a gap in the Orkney back line and managed to get the ball over the line. Dru Nicholson made the conversion bringing the score to 34-29 to Orkney.

The final 2 minutes saw West camped on the Orkney 5 metre line driving forward but being thwarted illegally by an Orkney side trying to hold on to their lead. The referee penalised Orkney six times but words of warning were issued rather than any cards shown. West opted for the scrum each time and with seconds remaining worked the ball from the scrum out wide to Mark Sim who completed his hat trick and levelled the game. Only the conversion remained and showing nerves of steel Dru Nicholson made the kick via the upright and West had won.

Jubilation amongst the West players, heartbreak for Orkney having been ahead throughout until the last two minutes. This was a great advert for club rugby and all credit to both teams.

West Team: 1.Pete Rhodes 2.Dylan Dawson 3.Andrew Love 4.Scott Cochrane 5.James Harley  
6.Ally Doull 7.Craig McColl 8.Mark Zoma 9.Harry Brewster 10.Dru Nicholson 11.Dylan  
Matthews 12.Nicky Sutcliffe 13.Fergus Robertson 14.Mark Sim 15.Alex Fiskin

Replacements: Neil Fullarton, Danny Dineen, John Brand , Fraser Brand