

Caithness 24 – 8 West

West made the long journey up to Thurso, with an overnight stay in Inverness, to play Caithness with a depleted squad owing to a number of players unavailable. This was not the best preparation against a team determined to make up for their previous week's loss to Gordonians.

Early exchanges were fairly even with West on the attack initially but well defended by the home side. Roles were then reversed as Caithness used a penalty to get into the West half and set up a driving maul from the line out. It was West's turn to defend and they did so with resolve eventually clearing to halfway gaining a scrum in the process which they won convincingly and a good kick by West outside half Dru Nicholson saw them encroaching on the home 10 m. However a poor line out by West allowed the home side to clear.



It was shortly after this that two injuries to West players – one a serious shoulder injury requiring a trip to Wick hospital – disrupted the West set up. With the shortage of subs this meant a return 1st XV action after 20 years for our touch judge Ross Wilson aged 54. Ross at least had advantage of having played there before but given that was 34 years ago, well before most of his team mates were born, his contribution to the game was somewhat limited (his account may be different!). He was somewhat relieved when one of the injured players Jamie McAulay returned to the fray.

The home side took full advantage of this with one line out drive crossing the line touched down by their No8 Evan Sutherland but not converted. West managed to get themselves on the scoreboard with a well kicked penalty by Nicholson but a second try followed for Caithness when a line break against the run of play saw them score under the post – duly converted to take them to 12 – 3. Just before half time excellent cross field play by the home side saw the score out wide with their full back Mark Jamieson touching down –unconverted. West woes were further exacerbated with prop Peter Rhodes being sent to the bin for a high tackle. Half time score 17 -3.

West started the second half well considering they only had 14 players but the sucker punch came when an interception saw the home scrum half Chris Hamilton run the length of the field for another converted try and the bonus point much to the justified jubilation of the home fans. But with the disruption of the first half out of the way and Peter Rhodes returned to the field West began to dominate the game and were finally rewarded when West full back Fraser Brand broke through the defence and excellent interchange between him and centre Nicky Sutcliffe saw them coast through the defence to score out wide. Not converted. The game ended with West pressurising the Caithness line but with no further score transpiring. Final score 24 – 8.



Although the score says otherwise it was pleasing that the young players who had to step up for their first 1st XV experience showed real commitment and in some cases real quality. Some of the regular 1st XV players may have to watch their backs!

West are at home this Saturday to Ardrossan Academicals with a kick off at 12.30 pm because of the Scotland International.

West Team: Andrew Love, Neil Fullarton, Dylan Dawson, Scott Cochrane, Kieran Grant, Donald Wilson, Craig McCall, Jamie McAulay, Harry Brewster, Dru Nicholson, Ciaran Callaghan, Nicky Sutcliffe, Kyle Peek, Dylan Matthews, Fraser Brand.

Subs: Peter Rhodes, Ross Wilson.