

Berwick 57 West of Scotland 17.

West of Scotland lost heavily for the second successive week on Saturday, losing 17-57 to an excellent Berwick side at Scremerston.

West's performance at Berwick must have given the coaching staff nightmares of Hallowe'en proportions. Having travelled with a squad weakened by injury, the Burnbrae men got off to the worst possible start with the home hooker, Ryan Wilson, scoring a simple try from a line-out five metres from the West line. That after only two minutes. Within ten minutes, the home side scored again after West dropped the ball after taking possession from a five metres scrum. Blindside Mason Emery was the grateful recipient. Three



minutes later, quick ball from a scrum near the West line saw impressive full back James Thomson score in the corner. Thomson created the next try, his superb break and perfectly timed pass sending in winger Ben Nicholson. After only twenty-three minutes, Berwick had secured their try bonus and the match, leading by 24-0. Almost immediately, centre Seb Trotter scored when West's attempted clearance was blocked after they took their own line out ball five metres out.

Gifting tries was not the only problem. The Burnbrae men had a decent share of possession but some good linking play between the forwards and backs was spoiled by basic errors. More than once a knock-on brought a frustrating end to a good

passage of play. They finally received reward for their endeavours, five minutes from half-time. Grady Slater's powerful break saw him send in Callum McCormack for West's first score of the afternoon. Any faint hopes of a comeback were quickly extinguished when lock Euan Thompson, outstanding throughout, scored after another West knock-on. Half-time 38-5.

Two tries through John Vasconcelos and Grady Slater in the first fifteen minutes of the second half gave hope of at least a try bonus point. They were near identical scores, both from rucks on the home line. Truth be told, West rarely threatened the Berwick line again. The home side scored a further three times. Thomson got his second try of the day, the best of the match, after fine support play. It was quickly followed by West gifting possession in their own 22, replacement Stuart Farnaby taking Wilson's offload. West's afternoon of misery was completed when more fine link play between backs and forwards saw the outstanding Thompson sprint in from twenty metres. The whistle for no side came as welcome relief to West players and supporters.



It was an afternoon to forget. Berwick is certainly the best rugby playing side West has faced this season. The Burnbrae side did, though, contribute greatly to their own downfall. Next Saturday, they travel to Ardrossan to face the local Academicals