

Friday Night Under the Lights

The decision of West of Scotland and Hillhead-Jordanhill to move the match between the clubs' second XV's from Saturday afternoon to Friday night under the Burnbrae lights was vindicated. A very good crowd watched a hugely entertaining and competitive match which could have been won by either side. It was the visitors who prevailed in the end, taking the points by virtue of a 10-7 victory. A packed clubhouse bar gave West some degree of compensation.

The playing surface was soft but overhead conditions were perfect as the match commenced. Hillhead-Jordanhill dominated the opening quarter with only resolute and organised West defence keeping the sides level. It took fifteen minutes for West to make their first foray into their opponent's 22. That attack was ended by a knock-on. Hillhead-Jordanhill deservedly took the lead on the mid-point of the half, Finlay Keegan finishing off good work by his forwards, the centre just making it to the corner.



The score acted as a wake-up call for the home side. For the rest of the half they were much the better side. West should have levelled matters but knocked-on two metres short of the visitors' line. It took until the final minute of the half before they finally got on the scoresheet. Inside centre Lewis Howick's perfectly timed run saw him find a gap in the Hillhead-Jordanhill defence to touch down. Owen Hourston's successful

conversion gave his side a 7-5 half-time lead. West had earned the narrow advantage.

The pattern of the first half continued into the second with excellent defensive work by both sides. It would be the men from Hughenden who would get the only score of the second period and it was very much against the run of play. Full back

Sean Black was the man that mattered for Hillhead-Jordanhill, breaking from halfway to put his side ahead again. There were just over ten minutes left for West to react but it was the visitors who would come closest to scoring. A brilliant chase and tackle by Howick prevented a third Hillhead-Jordanhill try. They then missed what looked a not too difficult kick from twenty-five metres. Their defensive qualities ensured the missed opportunities would not matter and they held on to win. It was a low-scoring game but it was splendid entertainment. Lower fifteens players of the past would not recognise the fitness levels of their modern day counterparts. Indeed, West loose-head Grant Robertson completed the Edinburgh Marathon earlier this year. Every player is comfortable with ball in hand. So many clubs, including some of the "big" names of Scottish rugby, struggle to field a second fifteen. West Seconds coach Allan Snedden has the luxury of selection decisions to make every week. It is a tribute to the club's policy of developing players through the age-groups and the hard work of the club's coaches.

Next Saturday, National League Division 3 returns with joint top West hosting third-placed Allan Glen's. It promises to be a close battle. Kick-off is two o'clock.

West of Scotland: Martin Wallace; Gordon Ferguson, Graeme Wallace, Lewis Howick, Jack McCallum;
Owen Hourston, Callum Rutherford; Grant Robertson, Lucas Deans, Adeeb Talghari; Reiss Drain,
John Brand; Stuart Murray, Jordan Mitchell, Tino Mudoti.
Replacements: Benjamin Bowman, Stefan Birkmyre; Rory Duncan, Nicholas O'Brien, Matthew
Crabbe, Lewis Austin, Adam Dudziak