

Harsh Lesson for West Ladies

West of Scotland Ladies 28 Biggar Ladies 35

West of Scotland Ladies took two points from their match with Biggar Ladies at Burnbrae on Sunday, a try bonus point and a losing bonus point. They also took away a lesson. If you don't make your tackles, you will not win matches. West were probably fortunate to take that losing bonus point. They were outscored by seven tries to four but whereas Alexa Smith converted all four of West's tries, Biggar failed every time from the tee.

Alex Love made her first appearance of the season, starting on the bench. She was called into action after only seventeen minutes when Louise Wilson was forced to retire through injury. By then, West trailed by ten points. Lock Alison Russell was on hand to score after Charlotte Harris was held up just short of the West line before Abbie Baillie squeezed in in the corner with the referee ruling she had managed to touch the ball down.

West came back into things with Love breaking into the Biggar 22, the ball being recycled before Anna Campbell's pass sent in Rowan Todd. A typical Love try put the Burnbrae side ahead. Taking possession twenty-five metres out, her pace and strength saw her go through a gap in the visitors' defence and under the posts. West now led but for only five minutes. After a number of phases of play, outside centre Rachel Philipps, hugely impressive throughout, went across the West defence before she straightened her line and went over. Biggar had a one point lead at half-time. The sides were evenly matched.

Biggar extended their lead on the restart. The forwards drove, the ball was switched left to reach no 8 Kirsty Ritchie who broke some disappointing West tackling to score. In this topsy-turvy game, West regained the lead five minutes later. After tight-head Vanessa Reid-Phelps carried for thirty metres into the Biggar's 22, West went through phase after phase before Reid-Phelps, deservedly, crashed over. Back to the other end. This was one West will want to forget but need to look at. Philipps took possession just outside the 22 and went through a gap that just seemed to get wider and wider. Three minutes later, West were back in front. They turned over possession in the Biggar 22 with loose-head Natasha Burge gathering the loose ball to canter in.

Two tries either side of the hour mark won the game for Biggar. West lost possession in their opponents' 22. Biggar hacked clear and gathered the loose ball on halfway. The forwards drove before the ball was moved right to Alexandra Philipps. She looked up to find open space in front of her and in she went. The last try also came when West lost possession eighty metres from their own line. Replacement Vicky Haddow supported Charlotte Harris' break to score in the left corner.

Ironically, on an afternoon when defensive frailties were West's undoing, the highlight of the game for many came when Alexa Smith chased almost the full length of the pitch to bring down Biggar full back Geraldine Kimm a metre short of the West line. This was in the opening stages of the game. If that standard had been maintained for the rest of the game, West would have had the win.

Next Sunday, 26 November, West Ladies are at home to Greenock Wanderers Ladies. Kick-off is two o'clock.

West of Scotland Ladies: Vanessa Reid-Phelps, Alice Masson, Natasha Burge;
Anna Campbell, Ciera Campbell; Louise Wilson, Holly Macdonald,
Rosie Broadhurst; Katie Wilson, Alexa Smith; Ailsa Neilson,
Rowan Todd, Jade Scott, Ellen Forsyth; Amber Johnston.

Replacements: Pamela Duffy, Ashley Blair, Megan Scullion, Alex Love,
Rebecca Francis, Rachael Millar, Olivia McCann.