

Disappointment for Much-Changed West Ladies Wigtownshire Ladies 36 West of Scotland Ladies 22

West of Scotland Ladies travelled to Stranraer to face Wigtownshire Ladies with another much-changed side. Pamela Duffy who made her first appearance of the season from the bench at Oban Lorne last week started at hooker in place of Alice Masson. Ciera Campbell moved back to her more accustomed role at lock with Niamh Farrell-Lewer at loose-head. Vanessa Reid-Phelps replacing Lindsey Smith at tight-head completed an all-changed front row. Bex Francis returned at centre in place of Claire Neilson.

West got off to the worst possible start, losing Campbell to a calf injury straight from the kick-off. The versatile Holly Macdonald moved into the second row, with Megan Scullion taking over at blindside. The home side moved ahead after five minutes, their impressive scrum-half Carla Campbell utilising her pace to escape the West defence and score under the posts. Sophie Mann converted. The powerful and athletic Wigtownshire pack were dominating in the loose, gaining ground but without the firepower in the backs to take advantage of it. West drew level after twenty minutes through a fine individual score by Alexa Smith. The stand-off collected loose ball in the home 22, holding off three attempted tackles as she forced her way over the line. Rowan Todd added the extras.

Two tries in the space of five minutes gave Wigtownshire a lead they wouldn't relinquish. Lock Hannah Owen sprinted clear to score in the corner before Neve Finlay followed her in, the hooker scoring from close range. Todd's try five minutes before the interval brought West back to within a score but in the last move of the half, tight-head Jocelyn Bullivant broke into the West 22 before finding her fellow prop Lydia Smith in support. This secured Wigtownshire's try bonus point. Smith would have an outstanding eighty minutes. The hosts led by twenty-two points to twelve at the interval.

Wigtownshire replacement Phaedra Snailham, on loan, with Alison Henderson, from Stewarty for the day, looked a strong, powerful runner and it was she who increased the home lead with a fine solo try with twenty minutes left. Mann converted. Todd's second try of the game narrowed the gap before Snailham repeated her earlier score, Mann again successful with her kick. West continued to work hard and got their reward of a try bonus point when Bex Francis finished off good support play with two minutes left. There was just not enough time left for the visitors to get the converted try that would have brought a second bonus point.

Next Sunday, West host Cartha Queen's Park Ladies. Kick-off is two o'clock.

West of Scotland Ladies: Amber Johnston; Rowan Todd, Jade Scott, Bex Francis, Kim Toland; Alexa Smith, Catherine Wilson; Niamh Farrell-Lewer, Pamela Duffy, Vanessa Reid-Phelps; Louise Wilson, Ciera Campbell; Holly Macdonald, Caitlin Reilly, Rosie Broadhurst.

Replacements: Megan Scullion, Rachel Morrison, Tia Stevenson-Cook, Ellen Forsyth, Lauren Stuart.