

## Back to Square One for West

### Allan Glen's 43 West of Scotland 25.

Having climbed their first ladder of victory with the win over Hamilton Bulls, West of Scotland were back down the snake of defeat at Bishopbriggs on Saturday, losing to a powerful Allan Glen's side. The match had been rescheduled after being postponed the week before. This was certainly not to the advantage of the Burnbrae side with a number of players missing through holiday and work commitments.

Overhead conditions were good with the playing surface better than could have been hoped for after the recent torrential rain. The crosswind was to neither side's advantage. West got off to the perfect start with Dru Nicholson slotting home a penalty in the opening minute. The home side lost hooker Matt Hughes in the opening exchanges but Glen's went ahead in nine minutes through a disappointingly simple score from openside Sam Morrison but created by their outstanding inside centre Levi Ekevati. From a scrum twenty-five metres out, Ekevati went through a gap in the West defence. He drew the last man before giving a simple pass to Morrison who went under the posts. Scott Thomson converted.

West quickly responded with another Nicholson penalty but it was the home side who would extend their lead just before the mid-point of the half. It came again from a scrum with the ball going right for full back Calum Herd to come into the line and go over. The lead was now six points but Glen's would soon be down to fourteen men. Blindside flanker Robert McKinstry flew into a ruck and in trying to clear out his opposite number Adam Young, he struck the West man on the head with his shoulder. An obvious red card that was accepted without argument. Under the head injury protocols, Young's afternoon was over, too. He was replaced by Angus Cameron. This was followed by a fine solo try by West full back Lewis Howick. The home pack had driven into the West 22 but the ball was dropped. Howick was first to react. He went the length of the park to score. Nicholson's successful conversion put West ahead. The lead would twice more change hands before the interval. A simple catch and drive from a line-out close to the West line was finished off by Connor O'Neil to put the hosts back in front. Two minutes before half-time, West's ever-improving lock, Adam Dunford burst into the home 22 before the ball was shipped right for Jack McCallum to score in the corner. Nicholson made an excellent job of the difficult conversion. The half ended with the visitors leading by twenty points to seventeen.

It had been an entertaining opening forty minutes but the second period belonged almost entirely to the home side and their dominant pack. Ten minutes after the restart, good support play took Glen's into the West 22 before Morrison found the gap to record his second score of the game and secure the try bonus point. Thomson added the extras. Four minutes later came the decisive moment of the game and one that could have long term consequences for West and stand-off Nicholson. From a tap penalty in the West 22, Ekevati drove through the West defence to score. In trying to stop his opponent, Nicholson sustained a shoulder injury which is likely to rule him out for some time. It is dreadful luck

for the West man as this was only his second start since returning after a year out through injury. Not only was Nicholson lost, openside Donnie Morrison departed after a yellow card for a high tackle.

O'Neil's repeat of his first half try secured the win for his side. His second row partner Jamie Howarth missed the last eight minutes after a yellow card for a high tackle but it was quickly followed by Ekevati intercepting a West pass in his own half and sprinting away to score. Thomson converted. It was West who would get the last score of the game. From a tap penalty in the Glen's 22, Nicky Sutcliffe's long pass let Callum McCormack in to touch down in the corner.

A full strength West side would have made this a much tighter contest but the replacements did a fine job, full of commitment. Next Saturday, Dumfries Saints will visit Burnbrae in a match both sides must win.

West of Scotland: Lewis Howick; Jack McCallum, Nicky Sutcliffe, Rory Cuthbertson, Callum McCormack; Dru Nicholson, Callum Rutherford; Stuart Murray, Connor Moran-Smith, Adeeb Talghari; Scott Cochrane, Adam Dunford; Adam Young, Donald Morrison, Max Bowie.  
Replacements: Angus Cameron, Connor Fleming, Owen Hourston.