

Brave Show By West Youngsters

West of Scotland 10 Allan Glen's 43.

Allan Glen's visited Burnbrae on Saturday in the first round of the National League Cup. Fourteen of the twenty-man West squad were under the age of twenty-one, giving huge advantages to their opponents in terms of both experience and physicality. They even suffered the late loss of Callum McCormack after he felt a recurrence of his recent hamstring injury in the pre-match warm-up. Veteran Martin Wallace moved up from the bench to replace him. Hooker Connor Moran-Smith started at loose-head prop with Donald Morrison at lock rather than in his usual role at flanker.

Glen's got off to the best possible start, in a manner than would have been of great concern to West. From a line-out ten metres from the home line, the Glen's forwards drove their opponents back with great ease. Sean Lennon got the touch down with Peter MacAulay converting. The Burnbrae men struck back immediately. Glen's knocked-on from the restart, inside their own 22. The West pack were put under heavy pressure at the scrum before No 8 Robert Sykes picked up. Play was switched left with the forwards making ground before the ball was moved back right through the backs. Jack McCallum forced his way past two defenders to score a fine try in the corner. Remarkably, within five minutes, West were ahead. It was their turn to score from a catch and drive, Sykes powering over.

The West youngsters had given a fine account of themselves in the opening quarter, matching their opponents. It was in the next twenty minutes the game would move away from them. From a scrum fifteen metres from the line, No 8 Calum Haddock picked up, fed Macaulay who sent his half-back partner Fraser Moore in. Behind the referee's back, Adam Young was being held back by two Glen's players. Levi Ekevati extended his side's lead on the half-hour mark. Good support play took Glen's into the home 22 before the centre threw a huge dummy to go over. Glen's are most fortunate this fine player has chosen to play at this level. MacAulay extended the lead to nine points. Just before the interval, Glen's moved three scores ahead, again after good carrying and supporting. Lock Jamie Howarth finished off on this occasion, Macaulay adding the extras. Before play restarted, West hooker Gus Cameron was forced to retire through injury. He was replaced by Connor Fleming. The young lock is only a week back from a long term injury. The versatile Morrison moved to hooker. The visitors deserved their half-time lead of 26-10 but the West youngsters had battled hard.

Any thoughts West had of getting back into the game were quickly dismissed in the opening minutes of the second half. Haddock scored after a line-out peel before Sam Morrison had the simple task to cross the line after picking up from a ruck a metre out. There was an unfortunate incident just before the mid-point of the half when three yellow cards were issued. Full back Grant Henderson's high tackle on Callum Rutherford saw almost all players come together to discuss the matter, resulting in West's Adam Young and Lennon of Glen's joining Henderson on the touchline. Cameron McHugh would get the final try of the game with ten minutes left. It was a good individual score, the replacement stepping back inside to find a gap and go over. It did, though, to most present, look as if he had been held up. Scott Thomson converted.

Allan Glen's got the win they deserved and wanted after their league defeat on the same ground in January. West got more good experience for their young players and proof that developing their own is the way forward. They finish their season next week with a visit to Dumfries Saints to complete their league programme.