

Match Report for 14th April 2018

Dumfries Saints RFC 66 – West of Scotland FC 3

Although the scheduled league officially ended last weekend, West were left with two unplayed fixtures to fulfil the first being an away trip to Dumfries Saints. This was always going to be a difficult fixture as Dumfries are riding high, chasing promotion and with a National League Cup final place already secured. Due to injuries and player availability it was an unfamiliar West team that made the trip with under half of the match day squad composed of regular First XV players and a few making their debut at this level.



From the kick off West were under intense pressure but good organisation and determined tackling meant that Dumfries's efforts were thwarted and the game stayed scoreless for the first quarter of an hour. The sin-binning of the experienced Fraser Smeaton for a ruck offence disrupted the defensive structure and led to two tries being scored in his enforced ten-minute absence. However, West's fourteen men still made their presence count and gained a kickable penalty when an attack into Dumfries territory was illegally disrupted. Stand-off Pete Burns duly slotted the kick which gave West their only points of the game. Two further Dumfries tries were scored in the first-half which meant that Dumfries had their bonus point with the score at 26-3.

The second-half continued in the same fashion. Periods of West possession and good attacking play during the first twenty minutes brought no reward but limited Dumfries to two tries. On 60 minutes the score was 40-3 but the constant effort then took its toll and West's defences were overwhelmed in a 26 point deluge. Ironically this was the period in which West had most possession and attacking opportunities. In the very last move of the game there was a genuine prospect of a West try but, with the line beckoning, the opposing stand-off intercepted the pass and scampered the length of the park to score. This cruel blow gave a final score of 66-3. Undoubtedly this reflects the relative skills off both sides on the day but it does not speak of the commitment, camaraderie and sportsmanship which West, to their great credit, displayed throughout the game.

Results elsewhere compounded this disappointment such that West now languish in bottom place with a game to play.

Survival is still possible if West can conquer the league's Everest in the shape of Kirkcaldy, the newly crowned League Champions, on 5th May at Beveridge Park. In rugby terms that would be a tremendous feat of mountaineering!

