

Hillhead/Jordanhill v West

32 – 34

There was a minute's silence at the start of the game with West players wearing black armbands. There have been a lot of vintage images in the media recently and that applied to the West line up with the ever youthful Alexander Fiskien appearing on the wing.

The game was 2 minutes old when following some good West handling, Scott Cochrane scored West's first try which was converted with a little help from the post by Dru Nicholson. A few minutes later West's Dylan Matthews was injured with him having to leave the pitch and Donald Morrison replacing him.

Hill Jills were infringing and so were West for the same offence, however the referee awarded a Hill Jills lineout from which West caught the ball and Darren Allan was sent fleeing for the line before he was pushed into touch.



There followed some nice passes and tackling from both sides with Hill Jills gaining ground, so much so that their stand off Rory Harte was over for a try, converting his own. From the restart West won a scrum and the sight of Grady Slater taking half the Hill Jills pack with him as he headed for the line was something to behold. The referee was down on his hunkers to check the ball was grounded. It was and Dru Nicholson again converted.

From the restart Hill Jills again headed up the pitch until a Brendan Laney style pass stopped them in their tracks, however everyone was brought back for an earlier West infringement. West were doing well keeping Hill Jills at bay until a nice throw to the wing resulted in their centre Andrew Brown scoring Hills second try out on the wing. There was no conversion this time. Would that matter at the end?

There was some stoppage time with Grady Slater needing some attention. He was unable to continue, and Fraser Smeaton replaced him. A few reset scrums and something must have been said since West were marched back 10m. Hill Jills were now pressing for something when Rory Harte scored that rarity, a drop goal from near the 22m line. Hill Jills were not having much luck with their line out as another throw was deemed not straight. There was a West scrum, but someone irritated the referee with West being marched back 10m and a yellow card shown to Donald Morrison for persistent fouling for varied reasons. Hill Jills Jonny Agnew took a knock and was replaced by Matt Henderson. Leading up to half time, Hill Jills were on the West line, however the referee saw something he didn't like and West kicked the ball out for half time.

The start of the second half saw a careless pass give the ball to Hill Jills, but not for too long. West regained the ball and following some good passing Callum McCormack set off on a great run but was pushed into touch. There was some more Hill Jills activity including not releasing which led to a West penalty and the referee advising Hill Jills there were too many

penalties. West were heading back up the pitch with a line out which was thrown to the front, but that touchline loomed too close again with West again in touch.

There was some more great passing and tackling from both sides when West lost the ball then 10m and then Rory Cuthbertson who was yellow carded. Things settled down and there was a good passage of play with West's Calum McCormack charging down a Hill Jills kick and Nicholas Sutcliffe being on hand to score, Dru Nicholson again converting. Proof that it is always worthwhile hassling the opposition when so close to their lines. It works both ways and there was great pressure on West's line with West conceding a penalty. Both 10s had been kicking well and Rory Harte added another 3 to his tally. Not to be outdone, West headed up the pitch again and Hill Jills were penalised for diving over. Penalty to West. Dru Nicholson converted the penalty and the score was now 18-24. Minutes later a decent run of play from Hill Jills saw their winger Sean Black score under the posts with Rory Harte converting. It was now 25-24.



West regained the ball from the kick off and there were a number of missed tackles as again, Callum McCormack headed towards and over the try line with Dru Nicholson adding the conversion. It was 25-31. West were soon down to 14 men again, with Darren Allan yellow carded. Hill Jills made the most of that card and Sean Black showed he hadn't forgotten where the posts were, dotting down behind them with an easy additional 2 points from Rory Harte. Minutes to go and it was 32-31. Could there be shades of a previous West game at Orkney? From the restart Hill Jills infringed and penalty to West. No real need for sweaty palms the way Dru Nicholson was kicking. Another 3 points added to his tally. The score was now 32-34. From the restart, the ball did not go 10m. West took the ball to kick it out, but missed touch. Luckily Alexander Fiskien was there to come to the rescue and kick the ball out bringing to an end an enthralling match.

It was a bit stop start and I don't think I have ever seen 3 West players yellow carded in a game before. It was 2 very evenly matched teams and West held on to win despite being down to 14 men for 30 minutes. Gavin Hastings had been at the pre match lunch, and I am sure this match would have taken him back to the good old days of club rugby. Two away wins on the trot and a well deserved bonus point win for West.

West team: Peter Rhodes, Conor Moran-Smith, Andrew Love, Scott Cochrane,
Dylan Matthews, Marc Zoma, Drew Reddie, Grady Slater, Jamie Carruth,
Dru Nicholson, Calum McCormack, Rory Cuthbertson, Nicholas Sutcliffe
Alexander Fiskien, Daren Allan,
Subs: Stuart Murray, Donald Morrison, Fraser Smeaton, Brodie Buchanan