

Another Full House for West

West of Scotland's try bonus win over old rivals Murrayfield Wanderers on Saturday saw the Milngavie side secure another five points and maintain their joint top position in National League Division 3. It was, though, a game for the spectators to enjoy and both coaching staffs to have nightmares over. The error count on both sides was high.

Wanderers went ahead in the first minute with a simple penalty goal conversion by centre Jamie Crooks. West quickly hit back when the pack drove over from a five metres scrum and No 8 Fraser Smeaton touched down. Five minutes later, centre Nicky Sutcliffe finished off some fine link play between backs and forwards. Dru Nicholson's successful conversion made it 12-3 to West. Most present envisaged at this point a comfortable victory for the



home side but it was their opponents who produced the fewer errors and better rugby in the next twenty minutes. On the midway point of the half, their forwards drove left before stand-off Lachlan Lee scored in the corner. Five minutes later, centre Michael Pomphrey broke some weak West tackling before being brought down ten metres short of the West line. The ball was recycled before going back inside to the supporting Austin Burroughs who scored. Crooks was successful with the conversion.

Despite trailing, the West pack was dominant with four successive scrum penalties being awarded. It was somewhat surprising no yellow card was issued to a Wanderer. Two minutes from the interval, Crooks did receive a yellow for a no arms tackle. West then regained the lead. From a scrum in the visitors' 22, Sutcliffe drew the defender before delivering a perfectly timed pass to left wing Callum McCormack to score. Half-time saw West lead 17-15.

Within the first five minutes of the restart, Wanderers had two opportunities from the kicking tee to move back into the lead. Both kicks, neither really difficult, were missed. Crooks could only watch on. It was West who would extend their lead and secure their try bonus point. It was again McCormack who would score, timing his run perfectly to take Nicholson's pop-up pass and go in from forty yards. The stand-off made the try full value.

Crooks returned to the field and quickly reduced West's lead with a penalty goal. With only six points of a gap, it was anyone's game. With thirteen minutes to go, replacement Dan York put West two scores ahead. Picking up at a scrum, he released Jamie Carruth. After the scrum half was held up just short of the Wanderers line, the ball was recycled and York was on hand to collect and score. Skipper Scott Cochrane got



his name on the scoresheet when flanker John Vasconcelos made ground before the ball was transferred right for Cochrane to come into the line and score. Wanderers' lock Cal Thomson, going over from a tap penalty, got a well-deserved try after a fine individual performance to reduce the deficit. Cochrane rounded off matters for the day with a typical barging run before cutting inside to go under the posts, making it a simple conversion for Nicholson.

Not a great performance by West with much for the coaching staff to work on. Callum McCormack was deservedly named Man of the Match. Next Saturday, West make the long journey to Kirkwall to face Orkney in a top of the table clash.

West of Scotland: Alex Fiskien; Fraser Brand, Nicky Sutcliffe, Rory Cuthbertson, Callum McCormack; Dru Nicholson, Jamie Carruth; Peter Rhodes, Connor Moran-Smith, Andrew Love; Scott Cochrane, Connor Fleming; Marc Zoma, John Vasconcelos, Fraser Smeaton. Replacements: Jordan Mitchell, Dan York, Donald Morrison, Brodie Buchanan.