

Signs of Promise for West Ladies

Sunday saw another disappointing defeat for West of Scotland Ladies, losing to Broughton Ladies by 34-48 at Burnbrae. This, though, was a performance that will give hope for the rest of the season, despite a number of players still missing through long term injuries. It was a highly entertaining game with both sides scoring six tries.

West lost the game in the first half. Some weak defence gifted the visitors a try after only three minutes. Hooker Ruth Morgan collected the ball from a line-out close to the West line before easily breaking tackles to score. Stand-off Lorna Murdoch kicked her first conversion of the game, the first in a fine display of goal-kicking. West closed the gap almost immediately thanks to the quick reactions of scrum-half Katie Wilson. Awarded a penalty on the Broughton 22, Wilson took a quick tap and found the equally alert Amanda Paterson in support to go over. Paterson would leave the game through injury midway through the half.

Broughton extended their lead through their excellent full-back Sian Furniss. From a scrum on the West 22, Furniss timed her run perfectly to take Murdoch's pass and score. The stand-off converted again. A penalty goal from Murdoch gave the Edinburgh side a twelve points lead before inside centre Helen Lyon got the first of her hat-trick of tries. It was not dissimilar to Morgan's try, Lyon easily getting through West tackles. Murdoch again added the extras. Broughton made their try bonus and the match points secure after twenty-five minutes. Furniss ran almost unchallenged from half-way to go under the posts. Another two points from Murdoch increased Broughton's lead to twenty-six points.

We then saw a remarkable change in proceedings. On the half-hour mark, West No 8 Alex Love picked up loose ball on the Broughton 22 to find a gap and score. That made it West 10 Broughton 31 at half-time. Thirty seconds into the second half, Love recorded her second try, West having gathered the ball on the restart. The gap was down to sixteen points. Was there hope? Only briefly. Fifteen minutes into the half, Lyon took Murdoch's pop-up pass to score, the stand-off converting again. Ten minutes later, Rowan Todd scored for the first time since returning from a long period out through injury. West's left wing scored in the corner after good work by the pack in recycling possession. With seven minutes left, Love completed her hat-trick, after a good forward drive. Todd converted. West were now a try away from a losing bonus point. It was Broughton who would score next, though, Lyon completing her hat-trick. Not for the first time, Broughton used a dummy runner to allow Furniss to come into the line before finding Lyon in support. A good score. Murdoch was again sure with the kick. Love completed her remarkable scoring performance, ripping the ball from Broughton hands and powering over for her fourth try. That still left West with a chance of that losing bonus point but the game finished, rather appropriately, with Murdoch finishing off a superb afternoon's work from the tee, kicking a simple penalty goal from fifteen metres.

West will take heart from aspects of this performance. Next week they travel to Cupar to face Howe Of Fife.

West of Scotland Ladies: Amber Johnston; Eilidh Power, Jade Scott, Emily Irving, Rowan Todd; Mhairi Mack, Katie Wilson; Amy McHenry, Pamela Duffy, Ashley Blair; Louise Skilling, Ciera Campbell; Louise Wilson, Amanda Paterson, Alex Love.
Replacements: Emma Lochhead, Shona Garry, Anna Campbell, Caitlin Reilly, Ailsa Neilson.