

West Remain Unbeaten

Allan Glen's visit to Burnbrae on Saturday promised to give West of Scotland their toughest test of the season so far and so it proved. Although they missed out on a try bonus point, West will have been delighted to run out victors by twenty points to sixteen against the side that before kick-off were in third place in National League Division 3.

With conditions heavy underfoot, it was going to be a day for the piano shifters in the packs, not the piano players in the backs. It was, though, good rugby that saw the visitors get off to the perfect start with a try after only two minutes. From a scrum between their own twenty-two and ten metres lines, right wing Fraser Moore timed his entry into the line perfectly to find a gap in the West defence. Reaching the home twenty-two, he found support before scrum half Jack Mooney touched down. West looked to hit back immediately with only a knock-on in the Glen's twenty-two ending numerous phases of attack. With a greasy ball, it would not be the last time a drive would be halted in this way.



West openside Marc Zoma's return to the side after injury was halted after only ten minutes when he was forced to retire for treatment to a cut above the eye, being replaced by Dan York, also returning after a spell out. Zoma would return. York was on the field for only a matter of minutes when West drew level. From a scrum five metres from the Glen's line, West went left. Alex Fiskien's looped pass to Callum McCormack, another returning from injury, saw the winger with room to cross for his seventh try of what has been an excellent season. By the mid-point of the half, West were ahead, a lead they would not relinquish. John Vasconcelos' break was halted illegally

just short of the visitors' line. A quick tap penalty saw the home pack drive over with blindside Fraser Smeaton being credited with the score. Cammy Finlayson made no mistake with an excellent conversion from close to the right touchline.

Glen's cause was not helped when, after several infringements, they lost left wing Ciaran Reilly to a "team yellow". Before West could take advantage of the extra man, they too were down to fourteen. Smeaton could consider himself rather unfortunate to receive a yellow card for what the referee decided was a "no arms" tackle. West dominated the last ten minutes of the half and should have extended their lead right on the whistle. The forwards again drove over their opponents' line and under the posts. To the frustration of players and supporters, they contrived to knock-on. At half-time, West led 12-5. On the balance of play, the gap should have been wider.

That lead was extended three minutes after the resumption with the simplest of tries. From a line-out on the Glen's five metres line, Connor Moran-Smith threw to Pete Rhodes at the

front of the line. The ball was returned immediately to the hooker who had an easy task to score, for the second successive game. A simple score against a defence that had switched off. Glen's quickly reduced their deficit, aided by some ill-discipline in the West ranks. The referee awarded a penalty to Glen's some thirty metres out. Conditions were not good for kickers but some chat from a West player saw the award moved ten metres to the West twenty-two. Scott Thomson had no difficulty with the kick. Four minutes later, he repeated the feat and the gap was down to four points.

West was still the better side but poor line-out play ended three successive attacks on the Glen's line. Two opportunities to extend the lead from the kicking tee were also missed. It was Glen's who would score again, Thomson with his third successful kick. Just one point in it and all to play for. West extended their lead again with five minutes remaining. It was a Glen's player on this occasion who would aid his opponent's cause, throwing the ball away after the award of a penalty. Owen Hourston, who had replaced Finlayson at stand off, slotted the kick home. Glen's had one last chance to win the game.



West kicked out on the full, resulting in a line-out on their twenty-two. Glen's, though, knocked on. From the scrum, West kicked far into touch and the referee blew for No Side. West of Scotland 20 Allan Glen's 16.

A deserved win for West of Scotland against doughty opponents. Gordonians, by virtue of a try bonus point win at Murrayfield Wanderers, remain top of the table, a point ahead of the Burnbrae side. Glen's drop to fourth place, overtaken by Hillhead-Jordanhill who are ten points behind West. West's next game will be at Whitecraigs on 26 November, kick off will be at two o'clock.

West of Scotland: Alex Fiskin; Fraser Brand, Darren Allan, Rory Cuthbertson, Callum McCormack; Cammy Finlayson, Jamie Carruth; Pete Rhodes, Connor Moran-Smith, Andrew Love; Scott Cochrane, Dylan Matthews; Fraser Smeaton, Marc Zoma, John Vasconcelos.

Replacements: Stuart Murray, Dan York, Drew Reddie, Owen Hourston.