

West Seconds Remain in the Promotion Race

West of Scotland Second XV coach Allan Snedden is a notoriously hard man to please. Even he, though, would have been happy, reasonably, with his side's 39-15 win over their Greenock Wanderers counterparts at Burnbrae on Saturday. Seven tries were scored, securing the bonus point, players returned from injury and the number of players appearing for the Seconds this season reached the remarkable total of forty-seven after only nine matches.

Heavy rain meant the match was moved to Burnbrae's 4G pitch. The visitors kicked off in a light drizzle but with no wind to affect the play. West were quickly into their stride, going ahead after only four minutes through Mark Robertson. The openside, making his first appearance of the season after injury, finished off good work by the pack. The lead was quickly doubled, some weak Wanderers defence allowing centre Graeme Wallace in to score.

West were completely dominant against the side they had lost to only last week. It was a much-changed Wanderers side. By the half hour the bonus point had been secured. West's third try saw loose ball collected in their opponents' 22. Cammy Finlayson's pass, through his legs, wrong-footed the defence and let Jack Williamson go in almost unchallenged. The full back would be the outstanding player on the field throughout. Right wing Jack McCallum was next on the scoresheet, going round his opposite number with ease. Lewis Howick's conversion took the score to 22-0. Wanderers lost loosehead Sean Hegarty to injury and with no front row cover on the bench, the match moved to uncontested scrums.

It had been a fine first half performance that had elicited no more than a "Please do try to be more careful next time, Grant," from the Seconds Supremo. With a commanding lead and a policy of giving as many players as possible as much playing time as possible, all seven West replacements started the second half. Wanderers took advantage of the re-organisation in the home ranks with a try from Drew Mitchell. His forwards drove from a penalty close to the home line and from the ensuing ruck, the stand-off picked up and crossed the line with ease. West were quick to reply. Cameron McKay kicked ahead and after the ball was recycled, McKay himself was on hand to score. Rowland Osii should have extended the lead almost immediately but was held up over the line. The sixth try was recorded on the hour when hooker Lucas Deans finished off a "catch and drive" from a line-out.

Despite being well behind on the scoreboard, Wanderers continued to battle. They scored through centre Brian McFerren in a manner that would have disappointed the West coach. A West goal-line drop out was taken by McFerren on halfway. He headed for the open space on his left and with the defence slow to react, he scored in the corner. West again reacted quickly with what was the try of the game. Veteran tight-head Stefan Birkmyre took possession on the right, close to that wee hairdressers near the bottom of Crow Road. Apparently. He went outside the left wing, dummied the covering full back, went back and did it all again before touching down close to the posts, lining up the seam of the ball perfectly parallel to the touchline. The coach's scream of, "Why didn't you go behind the

posts, ya fat @£\$%^&*?" disappointed some. Howick had a simple conversion. Wanderers did get a third score just before no side, Tyler Marshall scoring from a line-out.

A satisfying win for West that keeps them in third place, a point off the top, in West Reserve League Division Two. On Saturday, they head to Bishopbriggs to face Allan Glen's Second XV.

West of Scotland Second XV: Jack Williamson; Jack McCallum, Graeme Wallace, Cammy Finlayson, Martin Wallace; Lewis Howick, Craig Bain; Grant Robertson, Lucas Deans, Stefan Birkmyre; Reiss Drain, Tino Mudoti; Matthew Burke, Mark Robertson, Rory Duncan.
Replacements: Benjamin Bowman, Ronan Southcott, Mark Cobain, Rowland Osii, Andrew Little, Adam Dudziak, Cameron McKay.