

## Narrow Win for West

Murrayfield Wanderers 26 West of Scotland 27

With Roseburn Park waterlogged, West of Scotland's match with Murrayfield Wanderers was switched to the artificial surface at Wester Hailes High School. Injuries and suspension saw West forced into a number of changes, both in personnel and in position. The most interesting was scrum half Jamie Carruth moving to stand off with Callum Rutherford taking the no 9 shirt. Conditions were not ideal for rugby but the game provided good entertainment up until the last whistle sounded for those who had braved the elements.

West kicked off into a strong wind and driving rain on a bitterly cold afternoon. They dominated the opening quarter of an hour with the home side being penalised on a regular basis as their efforts to halt their opponents fell foul of the referee to such an extent the official spoke to the Wanderers captain only six minutes into the game. Sixty seconds later, loose head Aaron Martin received a "team yellow". West finally took the lead after twelve minutes with a simple try. From a five metres scrum, full back Aaron Purewal took Rutherford's pass to step off his left foot and score.



As last week, having given themselves the good platform of a strong opening period, West immediately allowed their opponents back into the game. Wanderers took possession from the restart, drove right and lock Barry Turnbull powered over. Lachlan Lee put his side ahead with the conversion. That lead was quickly extended when after a tap penalty twenty metres from the West line, No 8 Max Filby breached some disappointing West defence to score with ease. Lee was successful again with the boot.

Just before the half hour, a fine break by Rutherford saw him set up left wing Callum McCormack to reduce the gap to four points. West were reduced in numbers when Connor Moran-Smith received a yellow card. The referee decided the hooker had used his hands in a ruck close to the West line. With the advantage of the wind in the second half, West would have settled for being one score behind at the break. Almost on the whistle, though, a forward drive saw the Burnbrae men record their third try of the half and take a one point lead. Just before the try, Wanderers' tight head Brendon Reid may have been lucky to have received only a yellow card when he appeared to punch West's Fraser Smeaton. The veteran openside felt aggrieved at receiving similar punishment for making his thoughts known to the referee.

Five minutes into the second half, West took full advantage of the conditions with Purewal's superb kick from his own 22 going into touch five metres from the home line, the throw going to West. A simple "catch and drive" saw No 8 Jon Vasconcelos secure the try bonus point. The wind died down somewhat to the benefit of the hosts. They began to dominate for really the first time in the game. They got their reward with an excellent try by full back Michael Pomphrey after good support play by backs and forwards.



West now had a battle on their hands but with twenty minutes left Nicky Sutcliffe extended their lead again, the centre breaking tackles to go in from ten metres. Rory Cuthbertson was successful with the conversion. With eight minutes to go, Adam Cumming reduced the gap to three points, the centre scoring from close range. Lee's successful conversion left West with a single point lead. The defence held firm, though, and they secured a deserved win.

Next Saturday, West will be at home to Orkney. Kick-off at Burnbrae will be two o'clock.

West of Scotland: Aaron Purewal; Mark Robertson, Nicky Sutcliffe, Rory Cuthbertson, Callum McCormack; Jamie Carruth, Callum Rutherford; Stuart Murray, Connor Moran-Smith, Andrew Love; Connor Fleming, Tino Mudoti; Dylan Matthews, Fraser Smeaton, John Vasconcelos.

Replacements: Hamish Clark, Grady Slater, Lewis Howick, Cammy Finlayson.