

West Ladies Do Just Enough.

West of Scotland Ladies 24 Cartha Queen's Park Ladies 2nd XV 22.

West of Scotland Ladies began their National Shield campaign with a narrow victory over Cartha Queen's Park 2nd XV at Burnbrae. The Burnbrae side had looked comfortable with a 24-5 lead with twenty minutes to go but their opponents finished the stronger side. West did just enough to hold on to the win in the first of their group matches.

The West line-up saw the welcome return of flankers Amanda Paterson and Fiona Gassner after injury, the latter making her first appearance of the season. Joining the two veterans in the back row was Rosie Broadhurst moving to No 8 for the first time. Broadhurst is in her first season in the sport but has had a promising start, playing openside and blindside flanker in her earlier matches. The backline was more or less on its usual lines but with left wing Emma McFarlane making her first start of the season.

It was Broadhurst who would put the hosts ahead after eight minutes, finishing off a powerful forward drive. Cartha captain Katie Gray soon drew the sides level and we settled down to an evenly matched contest with West just looking that bit likelier to score. It took twenty-six minutes for them to regain the lead, outside centre Jade Scott making a superb break to record a fine try. Centre partner Emily Irving added the conversion. West began to dominate and it was no surprise when the returning Gassner extended her side's lead after good work by both backs and forwards. Irving again was successful from the tee. West, after probably their best half of the season, took a 19-5 lead into the interval.

The win looked secure for West fifteen minutes into the second half when the quick-thinking Katie Wilson made a break from a penalty, Paterson in support to crash over. At this point, West seemed to switch off as their opponents moved up a gear. Two tries in quick succession for CQP saw the gap narrowed to just nine points with almost twenty minutes left. West began to play again but with five minutes left, CQP scored again, this try converted by Caitlin Bell. One more score would give the visitors a remarkable win. Good solid defence saw West hold out to take the try bonus victory.

West Ladies are at home again next Sunday, Kelso the visitors. With Scotland facing France in Paris at three o'clock, kick-off at Burnbrae will be one o'clock.

West of Scotland Ladies: Amber Johnston; Eilidh Power, Jade Scott, Emily Irving, Emma McFarlane; Alexa Smith, Katie Wilson; Amy McHenry, Rachel Morrison, Ashley Blair; Ceira Campbell, Louise Wilson; Amanda Paterson, Fiona Gassner, Rosie Broadhurst.

Replacements: Alice Masson, Pamela Duffy, Louise Skilling, Millie Jackson, Caitlin Reilly, Rachel Millar, Ellen Forsyth.