

Sarah Beaney Cup So Much Without Reward

They battled. My, they battled. On paper, it looked a no contest. The visitors, Hillhead-Jordanhill had finished second in the Premiership to Watsonians. Their hosts, West of Scotland Ladies, had just completed their first season in the National League. They were much depleted through injury and COVID . A number of forwards were playing out of position. The result suggests it was the predicted no contest. It was anything but that.

West got off to the worst possible start, conceding a try in the first minute to Hills-Jills outstanding stand off, Amanda Moore. Some heads looked skywards but for the next ten minutes it was the National League team who dominated play, most of it in their opponents' half. The well organised visitors' defence, though, didn't look like being breached and it was they who got the next score. They turned over possession on the West 22 and from the ruck on the home line, Mairi McDonald scored a classic scrum half try. Moore converted to make it 0-12 after quarter of an hour.

West, backs and forwards, continued to play well in attack but were missing the cutting edge when near their opponents' line. They defended well, too, but the game was really finished as a contest when Moore finished off a fine passing move to get her second try of the game. She kicked the goal. Former West blindside Fran Campbell then set up the score that gave Hills-Jills their try bonus point with a break that used to be all too familiar when she wore the West colours. It would be lock Samantha Beal who would get the touchdown. Just before the interval, centre Sonia Smolina finished off another fine passing move to score in the corner. At half-time it was West of Scotland Ladies 0 Hillhead-Jordanhill 29. The scoreline did not truly reflect the game.

On the restart, Hills-Jills were quickly into their stride again with No 8 Hannah Telling going wide to score in the left corner. As in the first half, West responded to the loss of an early try by playing in the opposition half. Despite some excellent play, they just could not get over the line. Again, the Hughenden side responded with a fine try. After good linking play between backs and forwards, centre Lucy Mills got her name on the scoresheet, Moore converting. The final try of the game summed up West's afternoon. After phase after phase of West attacks, they turned the ball over close to the Hills-Jills line. A penalty was awarded for a high tackle which the ever-alert McDonald tapped, seeing open space outside the 22. She ran the length of the park to score and leave Moore with a simple conversion to round the scoring off at West of Scotland 0 Hillhead-Jordanhill 48.

It was a tremendous fighting performance by the West Ladies, they deserved so much more from the scoreline.

West of Scotland Ladies: Eilidh Power; Rachael Millar, Jade Scott, Emily Irving, Bex Francis; Alexa Smith, Caitlin Reilly; Natasha Burge, Pamela Duffy, Errin Hendry-Giles; Amanda Paterson, Ashley Blair; Rachel Morrison, Hannah Foster-Rain; Fiona Gassner.
Replacements: Emily Lochhead, Shona Garry, Anna Campbell, Aimee Watson, Katharine Wilson, Amber Johnston, Emma McFarlane.