

## Try Bonus Only For West

### Orkney 56 West of Scotland 26

Their flight to Orkney delayed by over two hours because of fog in Kirkwall, West of Scotland arrived to brilliant sunshine and perfect conditions for rugby at The Pickaquoy Centre. They departed with only a try bonus point to show for an afternoon of commitment and hard graft against an excellent home side. One point is more than most will take home from Kirkwall this season.

The Burnbrae side showed a number of changes due to injuries from last week's win over Cartha Queen's Park. They made a most positive start with hooker Connor Moran-Smith finishing off a catch and drive from a line-out after only two minutes. Their hosts were quick to respond with a try from loosehead Niall Campbell. He broke a tackle to score after the powerful home pack had linked well. Jon Tait converted. Campbell's fellow prop Glen Brough increase Orkney's lead in similar fashion after driving play by the forwards. It was the visitors who would respond, lock Adam Dunford powering over after a tap penalty close to the Orkney line. Lewis Howick's successful made it 12-12 after only eleven minutes.

Orkney were playing some very impressive high tempo rugby and it was no surprise when they moved ahead again just before the mid-point of the half. It was a lead they would not relinquish. Some disappointing defending allowed no 8 Darren McLean to score with relative ease. It did allow us the opportunity to witness the rare sight of an attempted conversion being charged down, Howick blocking Tait's kick. Five minutes later, Craig Brough got the touchdown after a catch and drive, securing the try bonus point in the process. By now, it was very much a backs to the wall exercise for West. There had been a number of penalties awarded against Orkney for high tackles but no yellow cards ensued. Somewhat surprisingly, it was West's Adeb Talghari who would depart for ten minutes for the same offence. By the time he returned, the home captain had been spoken to on two occasions by the referee. Almost immediately after Talghari's return to the fray, Orkney were penalised yet again for a high tackle but the card remained in the referee's pocket. On the interval, right wight Ewan Stevenson found the gap on the outside to give Orkney a fifteen points lead at half-time.

Scott Rendall's try immediately on the restart more or less secured the win for the home side, the hooker supporting stand-off Chris Guthrie's break to score. Rendall is invariably Orkney's "Man of The Match" when the sides meet. He was again on Saturday. An outstanding forward. Alex Scarth took over the kicking duties and slotted the conversion. Guthrie got Orkney's next score five minutes later after more excellent link play between backs and forwards. Dunford's second try of the afternoon, converted by Howick, put West in sight of a try bonus point. Disappointingly, almost from the kick-off they gifted Orkney a try. Full back Silas Cox collected a loose clearance kick before breaking a number of weak tackles to score. Scarth converted.

Stevenson's second score after some lovely play by the Orkney backs was followed immediately by another yellow card for a West high tackle, Nicky Sutcliffe the recipient this time. Centre Scott Russell's got Orkney's tenth and final try of the game before West were

again awarded a penalty for a high tackle. Still no yellow card. The visitors did secure a deserved try bonus point when Rory Cuthbertson ran clear after the referee played the advantage after an Orkney.....high tackle (no card). Howick converted. In the final minute of the match, Campbell finally took a yellow card for Orkney after a no arms tackle on West skipper Hamish Clark. The Orcadian admitted later he had been fortunate to escape a red card.

It had been a hugely physical battle with an Orkney side that will be one of the favourites for promotion. The try bonus point was much deserved. West have no fixture this Saturday but will host Dumfries on 21 September, kick-off three o'clock.