

## Lasswade 27, West of Scotland 16.

It was a much-depleted West of Scotland squad that headed east to Lasswade for their National League 3 clash. Injuries and unavailability meant only two replacements on the bench.

The home side won the toss and clearly confident, gave West the benefit of the strong wind as well as kick-off. A scrum on the home 22 saw the West pack win clean and secure possession on their feed. A confidence booster for the Burnbrae forwards. They would be secure on their own scrum ball throughout the game.



A scrum offence by Lasswade gave Sean Carden the opportunity to put West ahead after twelve minutes. He duly converted the kick from the Lasswade ten metres line, some fifteen metres from the left touch line. West were playing with confidence, the forwards winning plenty of ball but both defences were holding firm.

With half an hour on the clock, Carden put the visitors further ahead with a second excellent penalty conversion, this time from just inside the home half, wide on the right.

Despite being strong in the scrum, the line-out was a problem throughout for West. Lasswade were awarded a penalty having driven after taking possession on their opponents' ball. They kicked to within fifteen metres of the West line. Moffat threw to Hunter at the front of the line, he returned it to his hooker who raced in to score in the corner. Matthew Smith missed the conversion.

At half-time West led by six points to five. A narrow lead with the elements in their opponents' favour in the second half but a tremendous effort by the under-strength visitors. The forwards had shown up well in scrum and loose. The only criticism of the backs was they were too adventurous at times, trying the bold pass when ball retention would have been more prudent.

West got off to the worst possible start in the second half. Twenty-five metres from their own line, West again lost their own line-out ball. It went through the hands to inside centre Blair Smith who



broke through the West defence to score. Namesake Matthew converted. The battling visitors hit back immediately. The impressive Carden took ball in support and raced in from halfway. He converted his own try.

Lasswade regained the lead after fifty-four minutes. From a line-out, the ever dangerous Blair Smith floated a long pass to his left wing Lockhart. He scored in the corner. The conversion was missed.

Carden brought West to within a point of their hosts with a fine kick of some thirty-five metres, into the wind. That, though, was to be West's last score. With fifteen minutes to go, the Lasswade forwards drove over from close range, Cook being credited with the score, securing the try bonus point. Smith converted. Replacement Hart sealed victory for his side with a simple penalty.

The referee's whistle for no side saw Lasswade victors by twenty-seven points to sixteen. It was a tremendous battling team performance by West, deserving of a losing bonus point. If the commitment of Saturday can be maintained for the rest of the season, they will move well clear of the relegation zone. Hillhead-Jordanhill visit Burnbrae next Saturday, 19 October. The kick-off time is 3pm.