

Vital win for West of Scotland

Carrick 0pts ; West of Scotland 43pts

With Carrick's own pitch being unplayable, the fixture was switched to the 4G pitch at Queen Margaret Academy, Ayr. A win for West was vital against a side that will be relegated. Conditions were appalling with a near gale force wind blowing straight down the pitch. Heavy rain and sleet made conditions uncomfortable for players and spectators alike.

West won the important toss and decided to play with the wind. The kick-off was a sign of things to come with the ball travelling no more than five metres before being blown back. The visitors, though, made the perfect start. A scrum was awarded to Carrick on their five metres line. The West pack, technically superior, drove the home forwards back over their own line. Scrum half Jamie Carruth was on hand to touch the ball down. The attempted conversion was missed. The score was repeated six minutes later, this time on West ball. The scorer was No 8 Scott Cochrane. Dru Nicholson got his first points of the afternoon to move his side 12-0 ahead.

Another two tries before half-time sealed West's bonus point and almost certainly the match. The first saw the ball go through the hands of the West backs leaving Martin Wallace to run in from twenty-five metres. The kick made it full reward. A few minutes before half-time, Gareth Hopkins got his name on the scoresheet after good counter-rucking by the West forwards. Nicholson again added the extras.

West led 26-0 at half-time. Carrick had rarely crossed halfway in the first half but they would now be playing with the very strong wind. Any thought, though, of a home comeback disappeared five minutes after the restart when West were awarded a penalty try after a serious of offences on the Carrick line. Their forwards lack of discipline was a problem for them throughout the game.

West got their sixth try after a fine break by veteran wing Mark Sim. Cochrane was up in support to claim his second try of the match. The conversion was missed. West's seventh try of the game was the highlight of the afternoon. Nicholson's precise kick was caught by Sim. As he was tackled, he flipped a pass to supporting full back Sean Carden who scored. A try for a Paris spring afternoon, not an Ayrshire winter's day.

The only thing for the referee to deal with in the last quarter of the game was to yellow card the home side's hooker for use of the shoulder.

West ran out worthy winners by 43-0. It was a superb, disciplined performance in conditions not meant for sport. Next Saturday, they are at Hughenden to face Hillhead-Jordanhill. Your support at 3pm would be gratefully appreciated.