

Ardrossan Academicals 18 West of Scotland 28

A successful trip to the seaside saw West of Scotland return from Ayrshire with a try bonus point victory to consolidate their position in the top half of the National League Division Three. West, with skipper Scott Cochrane restored to the ranks, kicked off on Saturday with the “advantage” of the very strong wind that was blowing straight down the pitch. Dru Nicholson’s kick-off carried all the way to the dead ball line. Two minutes later, his kick to touch had the same result. It was going to be difficult to play against and with the elements. West took the lead in the twelfth minute. Left wing Nick Sutcliffe angled his run with perfect timing to take the ball into the home 22. The ball went right to fellow wing Callum McCormack who scored in the corner. Nicholson’s conversion was outstanding in such conditions.



West’s main problem up to this point was breaking the offside line. Repeated infringements eventually saw No 8 John Vasconcelos receive the “team” yellow. This latest offence also gave Ardrossan a penalty five metres from the West line. On another day, they may have settled for the three points but decided to go for the try. Solid defence by West defied their opponents through a number of phases before they eventually cleared their lines. They got their reward when, still down to fourteen men, they drove the home pack twenty metres to their own line. Ardrossan collapsed the maul and a penalty try was awarded.

A narrow fourteen points lead would have given West concerns for the second half, facing the wind. Gifting Ardrossan a try right on the half-time whistle must have added to the worries of the travelling support. A loose pass in the West 22 was picked up by the Ardrossan stand off Stuart Lewis who scored. 5-14 at half-time and West had a battle on their hands.

On the restart, it was soon 8-14, Lewis converting a simple penalty. The home side moved into the lead after fifty-seven minutes, scrum half Bruce Hunter scoring from a tap penalty, Lewis converting to put his side ahead. The West heads did not go down. Five minutes later, tremendous work by the West forwards, recycling the ball in the face of terrific Ardrossan defence, eventually saw Dan York take a pop-up pass from Nicholson to put the Burnbrae men ahead again.



Nicholson’s conversion extended the lead to 15-21.

Another Lewis penalty narrowed the gap but with just under ten minutes left, York secured the win and the try bonus point. From a scrum ten metres out, Vasconcelos picked up, York taking his pass to go over for his second try. Nicholson again converted. West held out to no side with no real

concerns. Such was the excitement over the victory, Ross Wilson absent-mindedly bought Dog a beer.

This was a fine win in dreadful conditions against a much stronger Ardrossan side that visited Burnbrae at the start of the season. With a two weeks break because of the Murrayfield internationals, the players will be able to recharge their batteries before facing the second half of the league campaign.