

## Hillhead-Jordanhill 10 West of Scotland 24.

A much improved performance in defence was the key to West of Scotland's 24-10 victory over local rivals Hillhead-Jordanhill at Hughenden on Saturday. Two early tries gave West a lead they would not give up, despite their hosts dominating possession for long spells.

It was a fine day for rugby with good underfoot conditions and the sun shining with little wind to affect the play. The Burnbrae side went ahead inside the first minute. From their kick-off, West turned over possession. Tiaan Wright, on his return from injury, broke left and found his captain, Scott Cochrane, in support. The lock powered over. Two minutes later, his second row partner Gareth Craig doubled West's lead. From a line out in the home 22, the ball went through the backs until Craig took the final pass to score. Although both conversion attempts were missed, West would have been delighted to lead by ten points so early in the contest.



Hills-Jills reacted to going behind by dominating the next twenty minutes or so. The West defence was solid in the face of repeated waves of attack. The gap should have been narrowed but Rory Harte failed to take advantage of a kick at goal, fifteen metres out, in front of the posts. The home pack continued to drive forward with most of the play in the West 22 but the Burnbrae men stood firm. They eventually gained ground through a clearing penalty from stand off Dru Nicholson. This relieved the pressure and West began to get their share of possession. It was a more balanced game now but West looked more likely to score. They did just that on the half hour.

Cochrane peeled off a line out in the Hills-Jills 22, the forwards gained ground moving to the right before Wright scored in the corner. Nicholson's excellent conversion gave West a seventeen points lead. The home side probably deserved something from their play but at half-time it was Hillhead-Jordanhill 0 West of Scotland 17.

The second half started the way the first had finished with play fairly even. It took until almost midway through the half for another score to be registered and it was West who got it. Nicholson's break into the home 22 found York in support. He set up a ruck almost on the home line before Cochrane picked up and went over for his second score of the day. The try secured West's bonus point. A few minutes later, the home support finally got something to cheer about. It was a simple score, No 8 James Reekie driving over from a line-out five metres from the West line. Reekie deserved his score having been outstanding throughout.

This was West's first match in three weeks and they did appear to tire in the closing stages. Their line was broken only once more, though, when replacement prop Michael Degnan



barrelled over from close range. Degnan had looked a threat with ball in hand from the moment he entered the fray. Only eight minutes remained and West saw the time out without any further scares as the home side looked to get at least a losing bonus point for their efforts. The final whistle blew with a scoreline of Hillhead-Jordanhill 10 West of Scotland 24.

Coach Andy Douglas will have been delighted with his side's performance. Scoring chances were taken and the side looked much more secure defensively. No 8 Tiaan Wright's return from injury and Tom Shelton at scrum half were the two individual performances that would have pleased Douglas the most. Next Saturday, West host Howe of Fife at Burnbrae, looking for revenge for their defeat in their poorest performance of the season. Victory would be a boost in their battle for a top three finish this season. All spectators are welcome for this match which will kick-off at two o'clock.

West Team: Aaron Purewal; Darren Allan, Nick Sutcliffe, Rory Cuthbertson, Callum McCormack; Dru Nicholson, Tom Shelton; Pete Rhodes, John Vasconcelos, Andrew Love; Scott Cochrane, Gareth Craig; Finlay Gillies, Drew Reddie, Tiaan Wright.  
Replacements; Dan York, Donald Morrison, Connor Fleming, Iestyn Humphreys.