

## West of Scotland 20 Howe of Fife 17.

It was a successful weekend for West of Scotland and West of Scotland Ladies. Two victories gained in very different ways but league momentum maintained for both sides as we approach the winter break.

On Saturday, West of Scotland entertained Howe of Fife. looking for revenge after their heavy defeat at Cupar in September. Heavy rain promised a dour battle but it turned out to be a very entertaining match for the spectators.

West got off to the best possible start with a try in the opening minute, skipper Scott Cochrane going over after a scrum five metres from the Howe line. Dru Nicholson converted. It took the visitors fifteen minutes to narrow the gap. Excellent work from their backs saw the ball go along the line before left wing Cameron Walker scored in the corner. Iain Aitken missed the difficult kick, leaving West two points ahead.



Nicholson had the chance to increase his side's lead from a penalty but his attempt just went to the left of the posts. On the half hour mark, West did score. Loose ball was gathered in the Howe 22 before centre Nicky Sutcliffe timed his run perfectly to take the pass and get West's second try. Nicholson converted. Howe thought they had scored a few minutes later when from a line-out in the West 22, the forwards drove the home pack back to their own line. The ball was touched down but

the referee ruled a double movement. It had been an entertaining first half in dreadful conditions with West probably deserving their 14-5 interval lead.

A Nicholson penalty fifteen minutes into the second half widened the gap but Howe quickly hit back. After his forwards recycled the ball through a number of phases, Aitken crossed in the right corner. The stand off, though, failed with his conversion attempt. Five minutes later, the sides were level. Full back Gregor Smith made a superb break from his own 22 to West's. Replacement prop George Tarling was in support to get the try. Aitken's successful conversion made it 17-17 with ten minutes left. There was time for a winner and it was West who got it. After the Burnbrae men pounded their opponent's line, a penalty was awarded wide left of the posts. Not ideal for a left footed kicker, Cammy Finlayson having replaced Nicholson. Skipper Cochrane opted for the scrum. It was the correct call. The pack took the ball to the right before the referee penalised Howe for offside. Finlayson calmly slotted the kick over and the referee blew for No Side.



An excellent win for West that keeps them in second place in the table. Next Saturday, they visit Strathmore.

## **West of Scotland Ladies 61 Broughton Ladies 5.**

West of Scotland Ladies' 61-5 victory over Broughton Ladies continued their run of high scoring victories, achieved by playing open, attacking rugby.

Although cold, conditions were perfect for running rugby as West would show to great effect.

They got off to the perfect start with a try from Caitlin Reilly after only six minutes. The scrum half picked up a loose ball at a ruck and went down the blind side to score. By the half hour, West had secured their try bonus point with further tries from Emily Irving which she converted, Reilly again and Fiona Gassner. Alex Watson's score and Irving's conversion just before half time secured the game for West at 29-0. There was still time for Broughton to get on the scoreboard. The excellent Sian Furniss at full back made a fine break to set up the deserved score. West Ladies led 29-5 at half-time.

Lock Erinn Foley got West's sixth try of the afternoon ten minutes into the second half. Hannah Foster-Rain, who started on the bench despite scoring five tries at Annan in West's last outing, came on to score with a typical break from thirty-five metres. Irving got her second try of the afternoon followed a few minutes later by centre partner Jade Scott. Watson rounded the afternoon off and completed yet another hat-trick with two late scores.

This was the third game running in which West had scored at least ten tries. It was eleven on this occasion. Next Sunday they will face a much sterner task when they travel to Stewartry.

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