

## Murrayfield Wanderers 24 West of Scotland 34

A strong second half performance saw West of Scotland secure a try bonus point win at Murrayfield Wanderers on Saturday. The victory keeps West in second place in the table, behind runaway leaders Lasswade.

Coach Andy Douglas was forced into a number of changes in the back division. Underfoot conditions were good with the home side having the benefit of a wind that blew diagonally across the park. West got off to a good start with stand off Dru Nicholson slotting home a penalty after only two minutes. Within four minutes, though, two basic errors, both knocks on, saw the Burnbrae side behind. The first was in the West 22. The home side took possession of the loose ball and moved it out to their backs. Full back Michael Pomphrey scored in the right corner, Fionnlagh Call's attempted conversion striking a post. Almost immediately, West turned the ball over in the home 22 before allowing left wing Calum Marshall to run almost the length of the park, evading two attempted tackles, to score in the corner. Call was again unsuccessful with the kick.



As has been so often the case this season, it was skipper Scott Cochrane who led West's fightback. He was quick to react when his side was awarded a penalty close to the home line. He took a quick tap and went over almost unchallenged. Nicholson's conversion brought the sides level at ten points all. Just before the half hour mark, it appeared loose head Pete Rhodes had been rewarded for a barging run to the Wanderers line but the referee ruled the ball had been held up. The try was delayed for only a few minutes. West moved back into the lead when, after excellent linking work between backs and forwards, full back Rory

Cuthbertson scored under the posts. Nicholson's good form with the boot continued. The Burnbrae side was down to ten men at this time, lock Gareth Craig having received a yellow card after the referee decided he had blocked an opponent following the awarding of a penalty to Wanderers. It appeared to all present he was most unfortunate.

After what had been a fairly disappointing half of rugby, it looked as though West would go into the interval with a seven points lead. Right on the stroke of half-time, though, a lack of concentration in the West defence after Wanderers had been awarded a penalty fifteen metres out resulted in right wing Benjamin Brown securing his side's third try of the afternoon. Call's conversion levelled the scores at seventeen points all.

While the first half was reasonably balanced, the second forty minutes was completely different. The West forwards dominated their opponents, the backs were much tighter in defence. The home side rarely threatened the West line. Ten minutes after the restart, the West pack drove to the home line and No 8 Tiaan Wright picked up to score. Nicholson

converted again. Ten minutes later, he increased West's lead with a simple penalty. Another try would secure a bonus point and almost certainly the game. The home side was under severe pressure but thanks to excellent work in defence, it looked as if the visitors would be denied their bonus point. It took until four minutes from the end before the Wanderers line was breached again. The West forwards powered to the line and Craig went over to score. Nicholson completed his perfect six out of six record for the afternoon. There was still time for the hosts to collect their own try bonus point. For reasons known only to one man, West were penalised when in possession a few metres from their line. Blind side Marko Mladenovic scored after a forward drive from the penalty. Call rounded off the scoring for the afternoon with the conversion.



It was not West's best performance of the season but it was another try bonus point win. Next Saturday, West are at home to Perthshire, kick-off is two o'clock. All spectators are welcome.