

## Rugby At Its Best

After an absolutely pulsating eighty minutes of rugby at Burnbrae, it was West of Scotland who gained the penalty bonus win with their opponents Berwick having to settle for try and losing bonus points. It was a hugely important victory for the West men in what was undoubtedly the best match seen at the Milngavie ground this season.



West had conceded over fifty points at Berwick earlier in the season and the visitors' third minute try through Gareth Hill suggested West were in for another tough afternoon. They were quickly on level terms, though, when skipper Scott Cochrane appeared on the right touchline to finish off what had been good work by the backs. Dru Nicholson's successful conversion gave his side the lead. A Jack Webster penalty regained the lead for the Borders side before Rory Cuthbertson put West ahead again. A cross-kick by veteran full back Alex Fiske was taken by Callum McCormack who found the supporting Cuthbertson. Nicholson was sure with the boot again.

Within two minutes, West had increased their lead to 21-8. Once more, a lock was on hand to finish off fine work in the back division. This time it was Gareth Craig who took possession to break a tackle and score. Nicholson converted for the third time. Berwick soon hit back through full back James Thompson's try after a West clearance kick was charged down, Webster converting. Remarkably, they would go into half-time in the lead. Just before the interval, some poor West defence allowed centre Duncan Hardie break through and touch down, Webster's successful kick making it West 21 Berwick 22 at the break. Time for a breather for players and spectators.

It took West only five minutes after the restart to move back in front. From a scrum six metres out, the West pack drove their opponents back over their own line, No 8 Tiaan Wright getting the score. A simple kick for Nicholson and the try bonus point. West's lead was soon narrowed to a



single point when Aidan Rosie scored in the corner. Half an hour to go. Cuthbertson danced through the Berwick defence for his second score of the game on the hour mark. Nicholson made it five out of five with the boot. The Burnbrae men held on to their eight points lead without much difficulty until the final seconds of the game. Loose head Darren

Goodfellow's score from close range secured the losing bonus point, Webster's conversion finished the scoring at West of Scotland 35 Berwick 34.

It was undoubtedly West's best win of the season in the best game of the season. They still have an interest in the second promotion spot with one match left to play. That will not be until 26 March when they travel to Strathmore.

West of Scotland: Alex Fiskien; Darren Allan, Nicky Sutcliffe, Rory Cuthbertson, Callum McCormack; Dru Nicholson, Tom Shenton; Pete Rhodes, John Vasconcelos, Andrew Love; Scott Cochrane, Gareth Craig; Marc Zoma, Drew Reddie, Tiaan Wright. Replacements: Conor Moran-Smith, Dan York, Donald Morrison, Dylan Matthews.