

## Solid Start for West

It was by no means a perfect performance by West of Scotland, far too many penalties were conceded, but the squad and coaching staff would have been happy to return from Perth's North Inch on Saturday with a try bonus point victory over Perthshire by 33-7.

Games between the clubs at the North Inch are always a battle so it was important the Burnbrae men got off to a good start. It could not have been better, in fact, West going ahead after only thirty seconds. They regathered possession after the home side had returned West's kick-off. Centre Nicky



Sutcliffe's break was supported by left wing Callum McCormack. Full back Darren Allan timed his run perfectly to take the pass and score. Dru Nicholson converted. Five minutes later, a simple No 8 pick-up at a scrum five metres from the home line saw Gary Slater go over. Nicholson again added the extras.

Even this early in the match, it was obvious the visitors' pack was dominant in the set scrum. When West were penalised for not straight at a line-out, Perthshire opted for a line-out rather than a scrum. It was a more evenly contested match, though, for the middle part of the half with West contributing to their opponents' resurgence by conceding too many needless penalties. The hosts brought themselves back into the game with a try after twenty-five minutes. No 8 James Mair took possession at a line-out before breaking some weak defence to score. Jonathan Armit's kick closed the gap to seven points.

It took West just five minutes to restore their fourteen points lead and again it was down to Sutcliffe and Allan. The centre's break found his full back outside in support to score his second try, his side's third. Nicholson made it three successful conversions out of three and West led 21-7 at the interval.

Perthshire needed to step up their game to get anything out of the match but their cause was not helped less than ten minutes after the restart when blindside flanker Simon McGarry received a yellow card for kicking a West player in a ruck. Some referees may not have been so lenient. It took West not much more than five minutes to make their man advantage count. Another perfectly timed intrusion from the full back saw him take Nicholson's superb long pass and find the gap in the home defence to score. That secured

the try bonus point, Nicholson's fourth successful conversion of the afternoon extended the gap to twenty-one points. West scored one more try before the end, Sutcliffe scoring a simple try after a scrum in front of the home posts. That finished the scoring at Perthshire 7 West of Scotland 33.



The West penalty count will give the coaches plenty of food for thought in training. There was of, course, much to be happy about. Hat-trick man Darren Allan and Nicky Sutcliffe always threatened with ball in hand and left wing Callum McCormack's performance suggested he will maintain his progress of last season. The pack as a unit performed well with tight head Andrew Love winning his colleagues "Player of The Match" vote before going home to a big ironing.

Next Saturday, 10 September, West entertain newly promoted Royal High at Burnbrae. The kick-off is three o'clock.

**West of Scotland:** Darren Allan; Fraser Brand, Nicky Sutcliffe, Rory Cuthbertson, Callum McCormack; Dru Nicholson, Jamie Carruth; Peter Rhodes, Connor Moran-Smith, Andrew Love; Scott Cochrane, Dylan Matthews; Marc Zoma, John Vasconcelos, Grady Lawrence. Replacements: Stuart Murray, Drew Reddie, Callum Rutherford, Donald Morrison.