

## West Youngsters Not Disgraced West of Scotland 6 Preston Lodge 28

Facing the league leaders would have been a daunting task for a full strength West of Scotland side. On Saturday, West were by no means at full strength. With, amongst others, the front row, the captain and the first choice stand off all missing through injury, West fielded their youngest XV in recent memory. They did not let the club down against a side of much greater experience and physicality.

The match began in heavy rain that would continue throughout. The experienced Ryan Hope made his West debut at no 8 but lasted just four minutes before retiring through



injury. He was replaced by Robert Sykes, another making his first appearance in the First XV. West started well with two penalty goals from stand off Josh Davey giving the home side a six points lead. The second of these kicks was from almost on halfway, an excellent effort in such dreadful conditions. Between the kicks, Preston Lodge had been reduced to fourteen men when openside Peter Johnstone received a “team yellow”

after a series of penalties had been awarded against the visitors.

Preston Lodge had rarely threatened the West line in the opening quarter but eventually their pack made ground into the 22 with good support play finished off by Scott Thomson driving over. Fraser Falgate was successful with the conversion. Falgate soon followed this with a penalty goal. On a day not made for the handling game, this was the last score of the half. At the interval, the visitors led by ten points to six. The young West side had matched their opponents for most of the half.

That narrow Preston Lodge lead was taken to double figures soon after the restart through two further penalty goals from Falgate. They were adopting a more pragmatic approach, employing a kicking game, exactly what was required as the rain poured down and the playing surface got heavier. On the hour mark, what the Great Commentator would have described as a “wee stooshie” ended with West’s Callum McCormack receiving a yellow card. This was for a high tackle which had apparently kicked things off. Almost immediately, Preston Lodge moved further ahead. It was a simple score, the pack driving from a tap penalty close to the home line, Jack Gordon being credited with the score.



Falgate added the extras. This finished the match as a contest with Jack Pollard’s try with five minutes left the only score in the final quarter. This was again down to a forward drive to the line.

No points for West this week but much to take from the game in the performances of their youngsters, particularly the lock partnership of Ross Dobbin and Connor Fleming and wing forwards Adam Young and Emin Thaqi. West's next game will be a trip to Edinburgh to face Boroughmuir at Meggatland on 2 December.

West of Scotland: Stuart Murray, Dylan Dawson, Hamish Clark; Ross Dobbin, Connor Fleming; Adam Young, Emin Thaqi, Ryan Hope; Callum Rutherford, Josh Davey; Callum McCormack, Rory Cuthbertson, Nicky Sutcliffe, Jack McCallum; Lewis Howick.

Replacements: Angus Cameron, Adam Dunford, Robert Sykes, Darren Allan.