

West Hit By Late One-Two

West of Scotland 20 Hillhead-Jordanhill 31

An eventually hugely disappointing afternoon for West of Scotland at Burnbrae on Saturday. It was a match they could have won. It was a match they probably feel they should have won. It was a match they eventually took nothing from, having led until the closing stages. Hillhead-Jordanhill returned to Hughenden with the maximum five points. It was a derby match of great passion and pace, highly entertaining but not great quality.

With Burnbrae's grass pitches unplayable, the game was moved to the artificial surface. In the constant rain, West got off to the best possible start through Scott Cochrane's try in the fifth minute. The skipper finished off a catch and drive from a line-out five metres from the Hillhead-Jordanhill line. The Hughenden men hit back in similar style, tight-head Liam Tighe being credited with the score. Rory Harte's successful conversion moved the visitors ahead.



Josh Davey put West ahead again at the midpoint of the half, the stand-off slotting home a penalty from twenty metres after Hillhead-Jordanhill were offside at the breakdown. It was not a great game of rugby, conditions did not allow for that. The try that put Hillhead-Jordanhill ahead again on the half-hour was a poor one from West's point of view. Harte was allowed to skip through the home defence almost unchallenged before finding Harry Perston in support to score. It was the last score of a fast but disappointing half which finished with the visitors ahead by four points.

Davey had an early chance on the restart to narrow the gap but his penalty attempt drifted wide. Almost immediately, though, West did regain the lead. Nicky Sutcliffe's grubber was hacked on by Jack McCallum and the winger's pace saw him first to the ball to touch down. Davey converted. Three minutes later, McCallum's wing partner Callum McCormack extended the home lead, the left wing finishing off after the pack drove before the ball was moved across the backline. Simple, classic rugby, good to watch and very effective.

Entering the last quarter of the match, West led by eight points. The next objective was a fourth try to secure the bonus point. It was their opponents who would cross the try-line. Not once but three times. West replacement Gareth Craig was yellow carded for a no arms tackle. Hillhead-Jordanhill quickly took advantage of the extra man. It was a second try for Perston, the hooker finishing off another catch and drive move from a line-out close to the West line. Fifteen minutes were left and West led by three points. West still had that advantage with seven minutes left to play. Within two minutes, that lead had become an eleven points deficit. A quickly taken tap penalty saw Tighe crash over for his second try and

the try bonus point. Harte converted. The restart was gathered by Jaysen Denley. The replacement ran for fully fifty metres unchallenged before finally being halted by West full back Lewis Howick. The ball was recycled for Howick's opposite number Sean Black to side-step two defenders to secure Hillhead-Jordanhill's victory. Harte finished off the scoring from the tee. After the visitor's scrum half Fraser Ebbitt received a yellow card with a minute left, West were twice held up on their opponent's line. A try would have given them the try bonus and losing bonus points.



Points that would have been invaluable as West fight to stay clear of the relegation zone.

Next Saturday, West travel to face bottom of the table Hamilton Bulls at Laigh Bent. It is a match West must win. Kick-off is two o'clock.

West of Scotland: Lewis Howick; Jack McCallum, Nicky Sutcliffe, Rory Cuthbertson, Callum McCormack; Josh Davey, Callum Rutherford; Pete Rhodes, Connor Moran-Smith, Hamish Clark; Connor Fleming, Adam Dunford; Donald Morrison, Adam Young, Scott Cochrane.

Replacements: Stefan Birkmyre, Gareth Craig, Gareth Hopkins, Darren Allan.