

## **Athletic 1 Carloway 1. 13/04/09**

Calum Tom Moody,

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On a perfect night for football, Carloway opened their season with an away match at Goathill with Athletic being the opposition. On a tricky surface, which was very heavy, it was Aths who came out of the blocks much faster, looking sharper and more hungry for the three points. It didn't take them long to capitalise on the pressure they were putting the Carloway defence under. A fantastic delivery from a corner, swung in by new signing William Macrury, was met with a bullet header from former Carloway player Nicholas 'Nuck' Davis who had a run on his marker.

With about 20 minutes gone, Centre half Calum Tom had to go off with a leg injury. His replacement was last season's top scorer Chris Macleod, making what will be a rare appearance this season as he is off to join the police force. With Chris coming on, Domhnall Mackay was pulled into the defence which certainly helped the Blues' cause. Both Domhnall and skipper Andrew Pongo looked comfortable (most of the time), up against the formidable partnership of Ally Walker and Scott Maciver.

Carloway's best chance of getting to Aths seemed to be down the wings, debutant Darren Mackinnon and Calum Mackay were getting forward from the back when they could, helping out Gordon Tago and Kevin Gochan ahead of them. This was telling when the ball was played wide to Calum on the right and he swung in a fantastic early ball around the back of the Aths defence which was met with a towering leap and well guided header from super sub Chris Macleod. The goal came with about ten minutes to play in the half and it seemed to settle Carloway a bit, who were perhaps a little relieved if not fortunate to go in at the break on level terms, especially with Gordon Craigie being Carloway's best in the first 45 minutes.

The second 45 was a different story, Carloway getting much more possession and getting at the Aths defence on a much regular basis. Kevin Gochan began to see a lot more of the ball out on the right and was giving the young Aths left back a bit of a torrid time. A Carloway corner led to a chance when the ball fell nicely in the box to Domhnall, who turned and with a snap shot found the target but was unable to force it past the Aths goalkeeper.

The best chance of the second half still fell to Aths though. A break away found them in a good position when Ally Walker was one-on-one and beat Craigie but Pongo managed to get back and put a block in and Carloway just managed to scramble it away. Another break down the right saw Kevin whip in a good cross, which was met by Kevin Savo who was just unable to keep his header under the crossbar. Both teams seemed to push for the win, and the game was quite open but neither team making real clear cut chances towards the end and the game finished on level terms.

A good result for Carloway considering we lost this match 4-2 last year, with Aths having a much better squad this year. A lot to improve on if the first half is anything to go by, but some good plus points to take from the game. Gordon Craigie was the manager's pick as man of the match, pulling off a lot

of good saves and dealt with everything well. Defence looked more solid when Domhnall was brought back. All the players coming off the bench put in a great shift, Chris scoring and working tirelessly to close down opponents.

Billy Anderson replaced the injured Darren at left back and added his composure and passing qualities. Alex Smith replaced Savo, always looking for the ball, strong in the tackle and overall looked bright and sharp, showing that Carloway have strength in their squad, especially when you look at the players who weren't involved, Murdo Squegg, Kenny Beag, Andy VP and the young guys Domhnall Iain and Dan.

Much improvement needed if we want to take anything on Friday when we meet league champions Lochs but we look forward to the challenge.