

Lewis & Harris League:

Point 1 (1) Carloway 2 (0)

Neil Mackay 45

Calum Moody 81

Kenny Maclennan 84

At Garrabost

1.6.09

Ref.: George Macaskill

Gordon Craigie

Calum Mackay Kevin Anderson Calum Moody DI Maclennan

Seumas Macleod Billy Anderson Kenny Maclennan Gordon Tago

Chris Macleod Dan Crossley

Substitutes used: Alex Smith (Billy Anderson) 42; Ross Bremner (Seumas Macleod) 67

After Friday's mauling at Rally Park, Peter Dokus shuffled the pack considerably and restored the usual formation, albeit with different personnel: Assistant Manager, Kevin Anderson, made his first start as central support to Calum Moody, Seumas Macleod dropped back and right to assume the injured Gochan's traditional role at withdrawn wing-forward, and Chris Macleod partnered the selfless Crossley in attack. The changes were positive, as the team seemed to have shrugged off the collective despair that had engulfed them after the Harris experience, learned from their misery, and took the game to Point. The formation seemed more comfortable for them. The back four maintained their shape throughout, anchored by a towering performance from Calum Moody who still made time to propel the midfield into counter-attack, while the Macleod brothers, Dan Crossley, and Gordon Tago continually troubled the Rudhach back men with their pace and movement.

At Garrabost, another beautiful, clear Lewis night (without mist) saw the Blues gain and sustain an early edge. Alec Wright made a good block early, then Gordon Tago was played in well on the left of the box but his shot was unlucky to be deflected away. Billy Anderson powered in a strong header, before a heart-stopping moment for na Gormaich as Calum Moody had to move sharply to clear off the Carloway line. On 18 minutes Crossley sent Tago free on the left but the keeper saved well with his right foot; then Billy Anderson met a Dan Crossley corner from the left, on the volley, and just cleared the bar to Wright's left. Chances were coming but going too. Alec Wright simply had to be careful, not inspired.

Point weathered the pressure competently and gradually possession evened out. Gordon Craigie saved well after a Kevin Anderson handball, before Calum Moody made a marvellous saving tackle about 12 metres out, on Andrew Murray racing in centrally. Wright then saved well low to his left from Crossley, after the striker had been fed by a low cross from the breaking Tago on the left. What's the old saying about living to regret missed opportunities? Kenny Beag went close, before Point had two incredible misses on 38-39 minutes: Andrew Murray was left clear 12 metres out in front of goal but he snatched at the ball and it went straight up. Then a free-kick on the left came

to an unmarked Alistair Gillies, alone in front of goal, but he outdid Murray by clearing the clubhouse with his attempt. In injury-time, after a Point corner had led to a ping-pong melée in the Carloway box, Neil Mackay managed to force the ball past Craigie; it was booted clear, but had clearly crossed the line.

The second half followed the same pattern as the first, na Gormaich with the balance of possession, creating - and squandering - numerous chances, while the Rubhachs looked extremely dangerous on the break. On 56 minutes an exquisite move out of midfield reached Crossley on the right, outside the Point box, and his cross was perfect for Chris Macleod running in from the left, but his header was miscued from 10 metres. A defensive slip freed Macleod again, who turned past a marker to shoot low, but Wright saved comfortably. Craigie then needed two attempts to gather a cross-cum-shot, before Gordon Tago cleared off the line from a corner on Point's right. Calum Tom headed past from a corner, but just as it seemed the Blues would never score, they scored twice in four minutes. A Gordon Tago free-kick from right midfield was missed by everyone and Calum Moody, who seemed to be everywhere in the last twenty minutes, didn't even have to jump, as he nodded home at Alec Wright's right-hand post. Sustained Carloway pressure was rebuffed and the ball came back out to DI, on the left; he doubled back to cross, Ross Bremner helped it on with his head, and Kenny Beag met it sweetly, close in in front of goal, and whipped high into the net. It was tough on Point, who had been in sight of the finishing line, when the roof fell in, and for the last six minutes, plus five minutes added on, they forced their tired legs forward. Craigie had to look smart, to save well twice, once with his foot and later, low to his right to push clear for a corner.

If possession and creating chances won games by themselves, Carloway would have sauntered to victory. The trouble is you have to convert a reasonable number of these chances. That said, this performance was immeasurably superior to last Friday's second, against a distinctly low-key Point performance; perhaps, their excellent result on Saturday in Uist took a lot out of them. Alec Wright, I would say, was best for them, with a faultless display which included having to claw away several dangerous corners right under his bar, under pressure from half the Carloway team.

For the Blues, the shape was held, and the machine moved forward cohesively, with Craigie steadfast at the back, the young guns improving with each game, and Tago rediscovering his best form on the left. Ross Bremner was an impressive sub, but Calum Moody has to be my Man of the Match, with a textbook centre-back performance - organizing/ holding the line, covering/ marking/ tackling as appropriate, and achieving the vital breakthrough when it seemed the moment had gone.