

Lewis and Harris League:

Carloway 2 (0) Ness 0 (0)

Kenny Dokus 53

Chris Macleod 90+1

At Cnoc a' Choilich

8.7.09

Gordon Craigie

Calum Moody Andrew Maciver (capt.) Domhnall Mackay DI Maclennan

Kenny Dokus Kenny Maclennan Billy Anderson Gordon Tago

Donald Chisholm Dan Crossley

Subs used: Chris Macleod (Donald Chisholm) 68; Darren Mackinnon (Kenny Dokus) 73;

Andrew VP (DI Maclennan) 86

After weeks with an extensive injury list, Peter Dokus suddenly found himself spoiled for choice with practically a full squad to choose from; a welcome predicament, considering next week's JS Cup Final against Lochs. He opted for a central defensive pairing of Pongo and Domhnall, with Calum Tom on the right. Kenny Dokus and Billy Anderson partnered a recovered Kenny Beag in midfield, while the still available Togan led the line with Dan Crossley; Chris Macleod and Darren Mackinnon, perhaps surprisingly, remained on the bench.

Cnoc a' Choilich witnessed a cloudy evening but dry, with a strong northerly wind cross-wise the pitch. The Blues opened briskly and confined a nervous Ness side back for the first twenty minutes or so, denying the Niseachs possession, and passing neatly forward from midfield. Right away Billy Anderson found Dan Crossley losing his marker and switching it on smartly to Kenny Dokus coming in from the right but his shot flew past. Another rapid move split the defence but Dokus shot over. At this stage Ness were chasing shadows but Iain Gillies was largely untroubled; good movement and passing was spreading the defence but not creating clear-cut chances.

Then the visitors almost spoiled the party: a break on the right on 19 minutes freed the spare man, but his first-time shot flew low past Craigie's left-hand post. Moments later, a speculative shot from 25 metres surprised Craigie, who spilled it but recovered brilliantly to block high with his right as an incoming striker tried to flick the rebound over him and convert. When Ness attacked, Calum Moody was tending to move inwards to form a traditional back three with Pongo and Domhnall, or supporting Kenny Dokus as wing-back when the Blues moved forward, so that Angie Campbell was able to exploit the space down Carloway's right when Ness broke. A dogged war of attrition now characterised the rest of the half: Ness being pressed back as na Gormaich drove forwards, but breaking smartly, most fruitfully down their left, to attempt to catch the, at times, over-committed Blues' midfield and back

line.

Carloway opened the second half as they had the first. Calum Tom headed over from a corner, then Dokus was released on the right but Gillies parried his shot past. Then a bit of magic from Billy Anderson out on the left achieved the breakthrough: he beat his man, reverse-turned, beat his man again, and crossed long. An unmarked Dokus came running in from the right and jumped to flick the ball with his right, about 6 metres out. Amazingly the keeper got his hand to it, low to his right but the ball spun up and over him and twisted into the net at the other post.

Ness had to withstand another twenty minutes of pressure as the Blues began to create the chances their outfield play merited: Dokus set up Crossley but Gillies blocked well, then a Moody assist presented Dokus himself with an opportunity but his shot was just wide. Then, once again, Gillies expertly blocked, this time from Kenny Beag. However, Ness weathered the storm and Craigie in turn had to make an essential double block. A Chris Macleod free-kick from 20 metres just dipped over, before the Niseachs had a gilt-edged chance to snatch the draw. Right on the whistle, a long through ball was nodded back to Craigie by Calum Moody but a Ness striker nipped round him and flicked the back-pass past the onrushing Craigie, however, the ball trickled agonisingly past the far post. To rub salt in the wound, Chris Macleod was sent free on the left moments later, and from the edge of the box sent a right-foot screamer high into the net.

The team that scores the goals deserves to win. Carloway probably did enough to win, although Ness probably feel they should have got something out of it. Their back pairing were sound throughout, and twin strikers held the ball up well before laying it off when the Niseachs broke, although they were less successful at their main job - striking. Ian Gillies had an excellent game in goal, but I think Angie Campbell on the left was their best man, always making room for himself, making himself available, moving with ease and parting/laying off well.

For Carloway, everyone answered the call: Craigie had another outstanding game, and DI and Dan Crossley get better with every game they play. Billy Anderson and Kenny Beag were solid in the middle and Kenny Dokus had an excellent second half. However, Pongo and Domhnall at the back were the rocks on which the team depended and Andrew Tago was, once again, Captain Courageous and would be my Man of the Match.

Nevertheless, the most remarkable performance of the night came from Sweeney on the touchline, who rivalled Bomie with his manic histrionics to "encourage" his lads. His finest moment: as one of his team was collapsing injured in the Ness half late in the second half, he yelled at him to get up and collapse further up the park in case he played the Carloway forwards onside!