

Lewis and Harris League:

Carloway 3 (1) Back 1 (0)

Gordon Tago 12

Ross Hall (71 pen)

Ross Bremner 49

Kenny Dokus 51

At Cnoc a' Choilich

22.7.09

Ref.: DI Maclean

Gordon Craigie

Calum Moody ? Andrew Maciver (capt.) Domhnall Mackay DI MacIennan

Kenny Dokus Kenny MacIennan Darren Mackinnon Gordon Tago ?

Ross Bremner Dan Crossley

Subs used: Alec Smith (Darren Mackinnon) 45; Calum Mackay (Ross Bremner) 76; Andrew VP (Kenny MacIennan) 82

Carloway had to forget last Friday's unfortunate experience at Goathill and confront what is currently the island's second top side, on the back of a 6-game winning home streak and unbeaten League run stretching back to defeat in Tarbert on 29th May. Also, with Back best placed of the chasing four for second place, the Blues knew they must not lose, and had to hope the Bacachs slipped up in the games to come, especially against Harris, Athletic, and Lochs. With the Macleods, Billy Anderson, Donald Chisholm, and Kevin Gochan unavailable, Darren Mackinnon joined Kenny Beag in midfield, with the newly available Ross Bremner joining Dan Crossley up front; Back were missing the injured Euan Moley and Martin Maclean, while Hector Macphee was also absent.

On a beautiful, warm and windless evening - midge-free too - na Gormaich started positively and gained an early grip on the game. A corner on the right led to a Calum Moody header hitting the top of the bar, before a throw-in on the right enabled Ross Bremner to pressurise a defender, chase the ball, and cross high. The ball was allowed to come all the way to Gordon Tago on the left corner of the box. Tago composed himself, let the ball bounce, and hit the sweetest of half-volleys high into Tohan's left-hand corner.

Back responded: Craigie had to move smartly to palm away a free-kick, then Chris Adams turned in from the right and had a decent shot, but the general flow of the game was towards Tohan in the Back goal and the chances were coming - and going - for Carloway against a subdued Back side. A Bremner header went just wide, then Ross Hall made a brilliant saving tackle on the same player; right on half-time, an unlucky Calum Moody hit the bar yet again, this time from a free-kick about 23 metres out on the left. In injury-time, Mackinnon ran through on the right but Tohan blocked his shot well, then Crossley's attempt with the rebound, before the final shot went past.

Na Gormaich had a storming opening 6 minutes to the second half which settled the contest. As Back broke from defence, Kenny Beag won the ball centrally about 35 metres out, and ran on straight on goal; one-on-one, he tried to slip it past the advancing keeper, but Tohan guessed right to make an

excellent block low to his left. Then an enormous Craigie kick-out got the Bacachs' central defence in a muddle and the ball was allowed to bounce through to a sharply-reacting Bremner to left-foot it well out of Tohan's reach low to his left. Two minutes later, Bremner figured again, with a flick-on to Kenny Dokus running in from the right. He tricked his way diagonally across the box, before side-stepping the last defender and flicking a low right-footer home.

With the job seemingly done, Carloway eased off slightly, and almost paid quickly: a sudden Back break on the right led to an attacker moving rapidly in behind DI into the box, leading to a scything tackle, and a penalty. Ross Hall placed it carefully low to the left, but Craigie pulled off yet another amazing penalty save, even holding the squirming ball from intruding forwards. Calum Moody went close with a near-post 6 metre header from a corner on the right before the men from Col Uarach were handed another golden chance to resurrect themselves, with a carbon-copy replay of the first penalty incident. DI suddenly found the grass of Cnoc a'Choilich extremely interesting! This time, Hall gave Craigie no chance with a cracking drive into the corner on his right. Back had their best spell of possession now, but were unable to really pressurise the Blues, and the Blues' substitutions made it clear that they in turn were happy now to play out time.

This turned out to be an astonishingly straightforward victory for na Gormaich, considering what could be at stake. Despite the best efforts of Ross Hall and Tohan to keep them in the game, this must have been the most ineffectual Back performance I've seen at Cnoc a'Choilich. Stalwarts like Murray Maclean and Chris Adams simply could not get going; Michael Mackay was anonymous, and there was a total absence of the Bacach's trademark fast building and breaking from the back, and the forceful, penetrating running up front. Maybe they depend more on Moley, Macphee, et al than they realise.

Credit to the Blues, however; perhaps, their positive combative approach was the key, with no one posted missing, and an 11-man drive which fully exorcised any lingering self-doubts. Craigie, Pongo, and Domhnall were faultless, while Calum Tom could have had a hat-trick; Gordon Tago showed exactly what he can do when he actually gets the ball, but the most interesting feature was that Dan Crossley was twice the player he normally is with a contrasting style of front man beside him. What a game Ross Bremner had ! A tireless runner, harrier of the opposition, ball-winner, goal-scorer ! My Carloway Man of the Match. Mark Hughes should offload Robinho to us for him !