

Lewis & Harris League:

Carloway 1 (0) Point 2 (1)

Gordon Tago 63

Daniel Keenan 14

Alex Wright 71

At Cnoc a'Choilich

14.8.09

Ref.: DI Maclean

Gordon Craigie

Darren Mackinnon Calum Moody (90+3 ?) Domhnall Mackay (67 ?) DI MacIennan

Kevin Macleod Kenny Dokus Kenny MacIennan Gordon Tago

Seumas Macleod (90+4 ?) Billy Anderson

Substitutes used: Donald Chisholm (Kenny Dokus) 75

Every winning run has to end some time; it's how it ends that is often remembered, and, unfortunately, Carloway's ended in anger and recrimination. Ruskin's pathetic fallacy seemed to have been proved as miserable weather was reflected in a miserable night for the Blues. Despite the lion's share of territorial control and ball possession, they consistently failed to penetrate a brave Point defence, marshalled excellently by Iain Mackenzie, through lack of firepower, deadly tackling, and simple bad luck. Andrew Tago was joined by Ross Bremner on the Unavailable list, so Billy Anderson started up front beside Seumas Macleod, as na Gormaich continued their quest for a creditable second place in the League.

Assisted by a strong Southerly wind, Carloway began as they had finished against United in the Lewis Cup and soon had a grip on the game, pushing the Rubhachs back deep into their own half with forceful tackling in midfield and attempts to spread the defence through Gochan and Tago. A Gochan header from a free-kick on 8 minutes went close, and a sharp move from Kenny to Billy Anderson saw Billy release Gochan with a Jimmy McIlroy-type pass inside the back but the shot was blocked for a corner. Then a bit of bad luck and decisive play from Daniel Keenan caused the machine to splutter. Calum Tom was unlucky to see an attempted clearance out on Point's right rebound twice and back past him. Keenan didn't hesitate and made a bee-line into the Carloway box. As the defence hastily regrouped to block him, Danny paused, fine-tuned the sights, and rifled an unsaveable shot inside the junction of bar and post high on Craigie's left.

The Blues were unfazed and returned to the task. Alec Wright had to move fast to flick over a cross-cum-shot from Mackinnon 25 metres out on the right; then Kenny Dokus picked out Gochan who brought the ball down expertly with his chest but was forced into a half-turn to send an overhead kick over from 18 metres. On the half hour Macleod shot over from 22 metres, but frustration was setting in because of an absence of clear-cut chances and dogged tackling from Mackenzie, Gillies, et al. Gochan was not running free

as he did on Monday and Anderson, Macleod and Tago were retreating to find the ball, so opportunities, when they appeared were 20 metres out, plus. Keenan almost spoiled the party further with two breaks, on 39 and 41 minutes, the first time as he drove into the box, being denied on the six metre line by Domhnall, then with a header from 10 metres from a free-kick on the right which just slipped past the post. Kenny Beag ended the half with a trademark drive from 25 metres, high to the right.

The pattern continued in the second half, Carloway with 70% of possession and play, Point defending stoutly as far outside their box as possible and breaking rapidly, given a half-chance. People were already starting to check their watches when, suddenly, what seemed then to be the breakthrough, appeared. Domhnall won the ball on the right 10 metres into his half and fired it 20 metres forward to Anderson, whose neat reverse turn and twist allowed him to send a low diagonal pass through the Rubhach defence. Tago' s marker chose the worst time to slip and Gordon raced forward unchallenged and sent a glorious shot screaming past Wright' s right from 18 metres.

Clearly the Blues thought the fun would start now but the mood immediately darkened when Domhnall was booked for handball on the half-way line (and a free-kick given to Point), although Keenan and - was it Andrew Murray? - were technically offside a couple of metres behind him inside the Carloway half. The next four minutes turned the game again. Kenny Beag met a low cross about 20 metres out centrally and sent a low beautiful drive just clipping off the outside of Wright' s left hand post. Alec Wright then sent an almighty wind-assisted kick-out downfield. Craigie, who had been reading the Gazette for most of the half, raced out as defenders and Keenan and Macpherson raced into the box. At the last moment he realised he' d come too far but could only flap desperately at the ball as it bounced high over him and into the net.

Credit to the Blues as they stuck to their task and were rewarded with a free-kick just inside the box for time-wasting by Wright (quite a surprise, that was!). However, the free-kick disappeared into a ruck of about 18 players. Billy Anderson now dropped back for Dokus. Tocan came on but still clear chances did not appear in the frenetic final minutes. A high clearance inside the 6 metre box felled a Carloway player and led to a reasonable penalty claim; a Point defender had to chest the ball off the goal-line and past the post as Wright was pressured. Stewart Macpherson seemed to use an arm when blocking a cross from the right.

Then in the final moments of injury-time Calum Tom sent Macleod free but, under pressure (illegal according to Calum Tom, for which he was booked) from 8 metres he crashed the ball wide. Then he joined Calum in Domhnall Iain' s notebook after the final whistle for sharing his opinions with the referee.

Anger at the referee is a form of displacement activity as frustration built up because efficient outfield play didn' t automatically lead to goals. If possession and neat build-up play won games, Carloway would have strolled to victory. Point were under pressure throughout, with the attack confined to

sporadic breaks, but they still scored twice, so deserved to win. Daniel Keenan took his goal superbly and, generally, functioned well in his increasingly lonely role up front, occasionally supported by the driving presence of Stewart Macpherson in midfield; but their real star, and Man of the Match, was Iain Mackenzie in central defence who consistently thwarted the Blues' s front men throughout.

Carloway' s defence and midfield didn' t play any worse than they did against United, they just inherited some of the Wasps' luck from that game. The back four were immense throughout and Gordon Craigie didn' t really have that much to do, although you could say the same about Alex Wright. Dokus had a good first half but faded, and Gordon Tago, once he moved forward, creating space between DI and himself and running at the defence, had a tremendous second half.

Billy Anderson looked happier when he dropped back into midfield, but Kenny Beag must be my Carloway Man of the Match, for his consistent never-say-die presence, aggressive tackling, ball-winning, and attempts to drive forward in support of his forwards.