

ABC Cup Round 2:

## **Athletic 3 (2) Carloway 2 (0)**

*Ali Walker 2*

*Kenny Dokus 68, 72*

*Scott Maciver 45+3, 90+1*

*At Goathill*

*19.4.10*

*Ref.: Al Macleod*

*Gordon Craigie*

*Darren Mackinnon Calum Moody (capt.) Domhnall Mackay Andrew "V.P." Macleod  
Kevin "Gochan" Macleod? Kenny MacIennan Murdo "Squegg" Macleod Gordon "Tago"  
Macdonald*

*Kenny "Dokus" Macdonald Seumas Macleod*

*Subs.: Donnie Macphail (Andrew "V.P.") 44; Dan Crossley (Seumas Macleod) 65; Ed Ansell  
(Darren Mackinnon) 71.*

After Friday's lacklustre display against na Sioraich, Peter Dokus rang the changes in the Blues' line-up: Pongo was unavailable and injury continued to rule out DI; however, Calum Moody and Gochan were eligible once more and were included in the starting eleven, along with Squeg in midfield and Seumas Macleod in attack, while Donnie Macphail, Ed Ansell and Archie Macdonald dropped to the bench alongside Dan Crossley and Calum Mackay.

On a clear but cold evening, thankfully wind-free, the game had hardly begun before na Gormaich found themselves 1-0 down. Domhnall Mackay tried to play the ball out of defence; Scott Maciver intercepted, then ran free on the right. Before Domhnall could get a foot in, Scott released it square on the edge of the box to Ali Walker all alone in the centre. He didn't hit it cleanly, but enough to take it under Craigie and into the net. Naturally this unsettled the Blues and they struggled to impose any structure on their build-ups. The back four pushed forward repeatedly in support, close to the centre line, and this allowed Aths' midfield to find the feet of Maciver, breaking right and left, and allow him to run wide at the defence, or drop the ball over the heads of Moody or Mackay for Walker to charge on to centrally.

On 7 minutes Scott Maciver just failed to convert a low cross from the left, then a marvellous saving tackle by Calum Tom just inside the box prevented a certain goal after Andrew V.P. on the left played both strikers on. A Maciver turn on the left allowed him another chance but his shot was too direct. Midway through the half, Carloway committed to 4-2-4, with Gochan and Tago pushing forward, and this seemed to negate Aths' earlier midfield dominance, compelling them to pull their wide men back.

On 38 minutes na Gormaich had their first real chance. A glorious deep Dokus cross from the right was met by an inrushing Tago on the left of the 6-metre box but Macritchie responded brilliantly to push the ball round the post. Then bad luck for the Blues: in the last seconds of injury time, the ball broke on the left of the box after a corner, and Willie Macrury drove it in waist-high; it took a deflection, carried on, and Scott Maciver reacted sharply to flick it

home.

Again Carloway tried to force things: Donnie Macphail had come on for the injured Andrew V.P. and the Blues committed to a simple back three with Macphail supporting Kenny Beag and Sgueg in midfield. This did force Athletic back but the first real chance of the half - and the one that should have killed the tie stone-dead - fell to the Hoops on 65 minutes: Scott Maciver broke from right midfield, got a lucky ricochet, then slipped it to his winger on the left, who looked suspiciously offside but moved on unchallenged to slip it past Craigie - and the left-hand post!

It might have proved costly in the end, as immediately the Blues got one back. Kenny Beag won the ball on the left and crossed low into the 6-metre box. Uncharacteristically, Macritchie spilled the ball, and Kenny Dokus strolled round him to score. The Blues went for it now and a few minutes later the ball broke to Kenny Dokus on the right corner off the box after a corner. He moved away from goal and his marker, before swinging round with his left foot to send an exquisite lob-cum-shot over the keeper and high into the far corner of the net. Aths were losing their shape and the game lurched the Blues' way. On 80 minutes a corner broke to Dokus right in front of goal but his instinctive shot was thumped past.

That was to be it because Athletic regained their composure and on 86 minutes an Aths corner on the left led to an almighty stramash under Craigie's nose, before being whipped away off the line. Then, deep in injury-time, the ball came to Scott Maciver on the left of the box. He stepped to the right and sent a low peach of a strike into the goalie's nightmare spot: along the deck and just inside the right-hand post. Craigie saw it coming all the way but had no chance of reaching it. Moments later Tago won the ball on the left but Macritchie redeemed himself with a magnificent block to his right.

For three-quarters of the game Athletic were comfortable, not exactly dominating the game, but in charge. Ali Walker and Scott Maciver (my Man of the Match) were enjoying themselves: ball at feet or over the top of the defence; one-on-one defending; plenty of space to charge forward into, while at the back, Gus Maciver *et al* were largely untroubled. Then midway through the second half, there was a sea-change: the Blues' midfield grabbed and retained control, with Kenny Dokus (my Carloway Man of the Match) and Kenny Beag superb, winning the ball, running with it, spraying passes around; Gochan and Tago were suddenly slipping off markers, and Calum Moody and Domhnall were finding men in forward positions; however, Aths reasserted themselves in the dying moments.

For the Blues, the aim must be to recapture the form of the last quarter of the game and replicate it; it recalled the style and substance of most of their performances last season. Also, a few more goals from Kenny Dokus like his second would be much appreciated. It's hard to decide which goal would win a Goal of the Season competition: that one or Scott's second.