

Eilean An Fhraoich Round 1 Second Leg:

## Carloway 2 (1) Back 1 (1) (Aggregate 2-3)

Kevin Anderson 35

Chris Macleod 6

Kenny Maclellan 64

*At Cnoc a Choilich.*

21.6.10.

*Ref.: Robert Mackay*

Gordon Craigie

Stuart Macdonald Andrew Maciver (capt.) Donald Maclellan

Tom Lawrence Donnie Macphail Kenny 'Beag' Maclellan Murdo 'Squegg' Macleod

Gordon 'Tago' Macdonald

Seumas Macleod Kevin Anderson

Subs. used: Calum Macleod (Kevin Anderson) 65; Kenny 'Dokus' Macdonald (Donnie Macphail) 81.

Yellow card: Stuart Macdonald 88.

Familiarity certainly didn't breed contempt between these two sides as, after an inconclusive, low-key opening, controlled by Back, Carloway realised there was still hope of retrieving this tie and came to life midway through the half; thereafter, both teams treated us to a full-on, bone-juddering cup-tie which provided an interesting exemplar of contrasting styles and approach. Because of the EaF format, there were the usual Carloway absentees - Moody, Mackinnon, Ansell, Esslemont, and Archie Macdonald - while Gochan once more swapped shirts. Domhnall Mackay was unavailable; Dan Crossley was injured and Kenny Dokus carrying one and kept in reserve. As in the first leg, United's Macdonald and Lawrence came in, while DI Maclellan and Kevin Anderson made first starts of the season. On the plus side, Chris Adams and Fraser Macleod, prime architects of the Blues' first-half "mauling" (Bomie's description) in the Jock Stein, were ineligible.

A quick strike put the tie further out of Carloway's reach, reflecting Back's early dominance. An early free-kick on the left had already provided the Bacachs with a headed opportunity but was glanced past, before the Macleods reprised their opener in Leg 1: Gochan fastened on to a long swirling ball down the right but was crowded out by Stuart Macdonald; as the ball twisted high, however, he forced his way back in front to cross hard and low from the bye-line; Chris Macleod timed his run perfectly to beat the defender and side-foot past the helpless Craigie from 8 metres.

When Martin Maclean fired just over on 11 minutes from 23 metres, a re-run of the Jock Stein seemed a possibility as Carloway struggled to get on the pace and close down the movement of the Bacach midfield, but despite their superiority at this point, Back failed to capitalise with clear-cut chances, and, just as they had in the League game here in 2009, Carloway, driven by combative midfielders like Kenny Beag and Tom Lawrence, and assisted by storming Pongo runs from the back, established a presence in the middle of the park.

On 20 minutes, their first chance saw Kenny Beag blocked and an Anderson

headed follow-up diverted for a corner. The balance of play tilted to the Blues, as Back, under pressure, tended to drift back into defence and allow na Gormaich to come at them; marshalled by Ross Hall, a faster Samuel and more creative version of Lucio combined, Back seemed comfortable till the 35th minute, when a long cross ball was uncharacteristically lost by Tohan; in the subsequent melee, Kenny Beag was blocked and Kevin Anderson, on the ground, rammed it home from 6 metres.

Na Gormaich ramped it up from the start of the second. Two minutes in, a Donnie Macphail free-kick from 22 metres was carefully struck but too straight, then a minute later a Seumas Macleod drive was beaten away for a corner by Tohan. Kevin Anderson, in full Billy Houliston-mode throughout, then shot past before just failing to get on the end of a Pongo cross after a crashing run from Maciver's own half.

The best move of the game presented the breakthrough: Stuart Macdonald won the ball deep in his own half and immediately laid it forward to Lawrence speeding down the right into the Bacach half; he wasted no time sending it on to Macleod, by now having his best-ever game in a Carloway shirt, who turned and sent it in to Kenny Beag moving in on goal, on the right of the penalty spot, and he stabbed it past Tohan's left from 12 metres. All to play for now between evenly-matched sides, employing radically different tactics: Carloway pressed whole-heartedly; Back were as unruffled as Inter, confident within their own half and giving away few chances.

A Donnie Macphail corner on the left on 75 minutes curled in over the keeper but was cleared from the line; Lawrence headed a Dokus corner past on 82 minutes, then two minutes later, a real opportunity: a diagonal cross from the left allowed Dokus to drift behind the defence, for once caught static, but the onrushing Tohan anticipated his careful lob brilliantly and tipped it away for a corner. The pace became frantic, but, despite 4 minutes of added-on time, the men from Col Uarach kept the door firmly closed.

For 70 minutes, both sides served up a whacker of a contest. Strong defences are not a feature of island football and it was fascinating watching the Back defence coping, either through design or circumstance, in the second half; only in the final few minutes did they look moderately rattled, as they tried to put a clamp on Seumas Macleod. No outstanding performances; just an all-round good team effort.

Carloway also discovered the form that made them contenders for most of last season: Andrew Maciver led by example, forcing his troops forward, while DI, off the pace at the opening, soon showed us why he was first choice left-back last season. Tom Lawrence gave an action replay of his first leg showing, which, in turn, helped Kenny Beag to become David Hay, in Frankfurt, 1974, versus Brazil, while Seumas Macleod, if he keeps developing on this form, will certainly return to Neza and become Enzo Francescoli, 1986, versus Scotland!

Carloway Man of the Match: Kenny Maclennan.

Back Man of the Match: Ross Hall.