

Lewis and Harris League:

Carloway 5 (2) Harris 0(0)

Archie Macdonald 3, 10, 81

Gordon 'Tago' Macdonald 63, 73

At Cnoc a' Choilich

9.8.10

Ref.: Alan Iain Macleod

Gordon Craigie

Graeme 'Windy' Miller Domhnall Mackay Andrew 'Tago' Maciver (capt.) Benn Esslemont

Donnie Macphail Murdo 'Squeg' Macleod Kenny 'Beag' MacIennan Gordon 'Tago'

Macdonald

Kenny 'Dokus' MacDonald Archie Macdonald

Subs.used: Kevin 'Gochan' Macleod (Kenny Dokus) 51; Ed Ansell (Graeme Miller) 72; Calum Moody (Donnie Macphail) 77.

At his darkest hour, Macbeth commented, *"Things at the worst will cease, or else climb upward to what they were before"*. He knew that even after the worst of nightmares, you wake up and must strive to return things to their former state; after a mauling, a football team still has to play its next fixture.

The omens tonight for the Blues were good: apart from Donald MacIennan (tendon) and Darren Mackinnon (working in Ireland), the only non-starter was Dan Crossley, in action on Tuesday. Granted, Calum Moody had a slight strain and dropped to the bench as a precaution, in view of Wednesday's Coop Cup SF versus Ness, especially as Pongo will be unavailable for this crucial tie. Andrew VP Macleod and Ed Ansell joined him and returnee, Kevin Macleod, as substitutes, and this allowed Benn Esslemont to partner Graeme Miller at full-back, Donnie Macphail and Kenny MacIennan to come in to bolster midfield, and Kenny Dokus to front with Archie Macdonald.

Both teams opened brightly. The Blues' approach was evident: waste no time clearing when under pressure; don't dwell on the ball; don't Roger Byrne it out of defence, but move it on quickly and exploit as much open space as possible. Kenny Dokus, especially, started explosively, repeatedly drifting wide right to stretch the defence before delivering the early ball. Hence, straightway, Archie Macdonald headed on a clearance to Dokus breaking right; he seemed to have been closed down by two Harris men, but, falling backwards, hooked the ball square to Macdonald, on the edge of the box, who moved one pace left, then cut a beautiful low left-foot shot low to the left of a wrong-footed Beaton, who seemed to have anticipated a cross.

A Pongo free-kick from 22 metres went just over, before an unbelievable miss by Harris: a mighty free-kick from the left halfway found Sutton ghosting in behind the Blues' back-line but his head-flick from 6 metres was weak and

Craigie pulled off a minor miracle by scrambling it away to his left. Immediately, the Hearachs were punished: once again, Dokus got free on the right, survived two strong challenges, and broke in on the right goal-line, and his low cross across goal was met by Macdonald, unmarked on the 6-metre line.

Harris were struggling: unable to build out of defence, they started to lose shape and were now giving the ball away cheaply. On 17 minutes both Macphail and Tago were unable to get on the end of a Mackay cross; a Sqwegg drive from 25 metres skimmed the bar in the 29th minute, and in 36 minutes Beaton double-saved brilliantly from Sqwegg, then Dokus's rebound. Moments later, he had to move sharply to beat Tago to a Kenny Beag cross.

The second half continued in the same vein as, immediately, a beautiful Archie Macdonald-Dokus-Tago move tested the keeper. Even Dokus's departure with an injured wrist didn't inhibit momentum as Gochan provided an inspirational replacement as a traditional right-winger.

A flurry of Harris corners led to a difficult hanging Sqwegg free-kick from 25 metres being tipped over; the resultant Macphail corner on the right dipped along the 6-metre line, falling neatly for ace predator Tago to half-volley home. A Tago free-kick from 22 metres was answered by a Craigie block from Sutton, before Gochan once more stormed down the right; he cut in neatly and found Tago on the left edge of the box. Tago took one step to his right, before expertly finishing low to Beaton's left with his right foot.

Na Gormaich seemed determined to exorcise their internal demons and continued to push hard: on 76 minutes a glancing Pongo header off a Macphail corner on the left whacked the crossbar and spun away; then Gochan shot over from a Calum Moody lay-off. Finally, a Kenny Beag through ball found Archie Macdonald moving clear centrally, 25 metres out, in a suspiciously offside position. No flag went up; indeed, there was no linesman! So he ran on, rounded the keeper, and coolly finished.

In many ways Harris were unlucky as they ran into a Carloway express desperate to show the island football fraternity - and themselves - and Tam Cowan - that they are far better than the Aths' result suggests, especially when they have everyone available. Also, it means entering Wednesday's Coop clash in a positive frame of mind.

Harris had their good points, though: an excellent keeper in David Beaton; positive defence in Murdo Macleod, and tireless running in midfield from Mulhearn(?) and the talismanic Koch. Up front Sutton and the youngbloods pressured throughout, but despite their efforts and a series of dangerous corners in both halves, they never really threatened, and Carloway were able to control most of the play.

Craigie had his standard miraculous save to set them on their way; the back four were cast-iron and forceful, while the creativity of Donnie Macphail neatly complemented the drive of the ball-winning Sgwegg, while Kenny Beag supplied a subtle blend of both approaches. Balls to feet facing goal brought out the best in Gordon Tago and Archie Uibhistich, while there were electric contributions from Kenny Dokus (first half) and Kevin Gochan (second half).

Harris Man of the Match: Murdo Macleod.

Carlway Man of the Match: Kenny Maclennan.