

Lewis and Harris League:

Lochs 2 (0) Carloway 1 (1)

Jim O'Donnell 67

Donnie Macphail 22

Gordon Craigie 81

Referee: George Macaskill.

At Sgoil nan Loch, Leurbost

Monday, 25.6.12

David Beaton

Ali "Tolsta" Maciver Domhnall Mackay (capt.) Gus Maciver Donald "D.I." MacIennan

Seumas Macleod Murdo 'Squeg' Macleod Donnie Macphail Andrew "Togo" Maciver

Kenny "Dokus" Macdonald

Kevin "Gochan" Macleod

Subs.: Calum Iain Macleod, David Macleod, Ben Smith

Yellow card: Kevin 'Gochan' Macleod

Familiarity breeds contempt or so the saying goes. This was the third meeting between these sides so far this season with both sides claiming one victory each. For Carlway there was a real need to get back to winning ways after having lost their last three games albeit they were all games that they really should have won.

For those turning up at the Sgoil Na Loch pitch there was some expected and unexpected news. Carlway, as we had all heard earlier, had lost the services of their main striker Scott Macaulay for the remainder of the season, him being the victim of a vicious tackle whilst playing for the select on Saturday which resulted in him breaking his leg and suffering ligament damage. You feel heartfelt sorry for Scott after all the hard work he has put in getting himself fit after such a serious injury. Additionally Dan Crossley had suffered a knock playing in the same game which meant he was unavailable as well. The mood amongst the Carlway fans wasn't of the best and that's being polite.

This meant a reshuffle in the Carlway ranks with Ali Tolsta Maciver going to right back, Seumas Macleod moving to right midfield, Kenny Dokus moving to left midfield, Murdo Squegg and Donnie Macphail joining Andrew Maciver in the centre of midfield and Kevin Gochan playing upfront in a 4-5-1 formation. Lochs were also having personnel issues. In fact the kick off was delayed for fifteen minutes to see if players would turn up. As it turned out they had to start with ten players with a host of unfamiliar faces and the biggest surprise was the appearance of former Carlway legend Gordon Craigie playing at centre forward. Would there be a sting in the tail?

With their numerical advantage Carlway dominated early proceedings. Chances were created and chances missed. a familiar tale so far this season. The Lochs goalie wasn't overworked with most of the chances clearing the bar or going past the post.

On seven minutes Lochs were back At full strength when David Macmillan coming on. He had just arrived back on the island after a weekend at the Isle

of Wight Festival. However his arrival failed to stem the amount of possession Carloway enjoyed and the number of chances they missed. The football being played was good, the finishing mediocre.

Good teams always identify weaknesses. expose these weaknesses and finally exploit these weaknesses. It was becoming very apparent that Seumas Macleod had the beating of his full back opponent young Maciver. Time and again Squegg played the ball wide to Seumas for him to run and beat the full back. From one of these Squegg passes Seumas got to the bye line to fire across a cross for Donnie Macphail to head home. Good move and good goal no matter the standard of the opposition. 22 minutes gone and now sit back for more of the same or so we thought.

For some inexplicable reason, the supply of ball to Seumas dried up. However chances were still being created With Kenny Dokus, Gochan, Andrew Tago and Seumas missing good chances. However the Lochs weakness at full back was not being properly exploited with most of the play going through the middle rather than out wide especially wide on the right. Ominously for Carloway, Lochs nearly scored when Angie Campbell took advantage of slack marking only to see his header come off the post.

Half time arrived with Gochan receiving his customary booking for dissent and Carloway leading 1-0. The mood amongst their supporters wasn't one of overwhelming optimism though.

Half Time Lochs 0 Carloway 1

Lochs immediately brought on two substitutes, Ally Mackenzie and Peter Mackenzie (old). Ally had been delayed because of work whereas Peter had just arrived back after a weekend in Benidorm. No not Bernera, Benidorm!! Lochs men are certainly far travelled these days. These changes enabled young Maciver to move to left midfield and O'Donnell to move to right back. Roy Shirkie to his credit kept two players up front just as he had when they started off with just ten players.

However, although Lochs looked a more solid outfit, the pattern of the play remained the same. Carloway enjoying plenty of possession and creating and missing chances the best of them falling to Dokus and Gochan.

As the game wore on Lochs came more into it. The arrival of the two Mackenzies and the consistency of another Mackenzie, Graeme, seemed to give the rest of the players a lift with Angie Campell and David Macmillan becoming a lot more influential. Lava hit the top of the bar and Gordon Craigie shot wide. You had a feeling that Lochs were going to take an opportunity and that's what happened..

From a corner on the right Jim O Donnell got his head on the ball to beat Beaton 1-1 and an awful feeling of déjà vu for the long suffering Carloway support.

Straight from the kick off and a wonderful move saw Kenny Dokus released on the left hand side of the box. He easily beat his man but his shot was well saved by Houston in the Lochs goal. Another chance saw Houston save easily from a Seumas Macleod header.

With fifteen minutes to go a game changing moment occurred although none of the spectators knew it at the time. Craigie after a fifty fifty challenge went down injured. On came that loyal Lochs man Angie Hogg to administer treatment to howls of derision from the away support. Whatever the physio/kitman/assistant manager administered seemed to do wonders for Craigie as Carloway were about to find out.

It was becoming more obvious that Lochs thought they could win the game. Campbell had a thirty yard drive tipped over the bar by Beaton just before Carloway were hit by the sucker punch to beat all sucker punches. A long ball from the back was knocked on by Lava for Gordon Craigie to expertly half volley home from 18 yards. A real sting in the tail and one which he celebrated with his team mates with much relish.

Carloway tried manfully to snatch an equaliser in the final ten minutes none more so than D I Macleannan who ran himself into the ground. All to no avail and Lochs ran out unexpected 2-1 winners. A deserved victory? Maybe not. An inevitable result? Maybe yes.

For Carloway Seumas Macleod continued his recent excellent form, Gus Maciver had another excellent game and D I Macleannan worked harder than most to get a result for his team. Again the failure to take chances hurt Carloway and that failure is now putting unfair pressure on the defence. If they are to get anything out of this season chances must be taken and weaknesses in opposing teams must be exploited.

Lochs must still be in shock after winning a game where for long periods they were so outplayed. Graeme Mackenzie had an excellent game and was my overall man of the match. Of the young players, Masson has potential and worked very hard.

Carloway Man of the Match - Seumas Macleod
Lochs Man of the Match - Graeme Mackenzie