

Lewis and Harris League:

Harris 3 (2) Carloway 3 (1)

*Kieran Mulhearn 14 Domhnall Mackay pen. 39, pen 57
Mark Morrison 25 Andrew 'Tago' Maciver 50
Own goal 90+1*

*Referee: Calum 'Chancy' Macleod
At Rally Park, Tarbert
Monday 2.7.12*

David Beaton

*Calum Iain Macleod Domhnall Mackay (Capt.) Gus Maciver Donald 'DI' MacIannan
Kenny 'Dokus' MacDonald Andrew 'Tago' Maciver Murdo 'Squeg' Macleod Donnie
Macphail*

Kevin 'Gogan' Macleod Dan Crossley

*Subs: Andy 'VP' Macleod (Calum Iain Macleod) 72, Paul Forster (Kenny 'Dokus' MacDonald)
77*

Yellow cards: Gus Maciver 40, Kevin 'Gogan' Macleod 56, Domhnall Mackay 67

Carloway's already faint title hopes were surely dealt a fatal blow after Na Gormaich conceded an injury time goal, and squandered another two league points at Rally Park in the process. The winless run now extends to five matches, all of which have been away from home.

Whilst history hasn't always been kind to the Blues when they have ventured South of the Clisham, Harris' record of no points from their first nine league matches this season, Carlway fans may have been forgiven for being optimistic of the team ending its poor run and returning with the points.

It was a pleasantly warm, dry and calm evening in Tarbert, and a good night for football. The pitch, like all others on the island at the moment, was bone dry.

Seumas Macleod and Ali 'Tolsta' Maciver were unavailable for Carlway following their last outing, when they were 'Craigied' by Lochs, in addition to long-term absentees Calum Tom Moody, Gordon 'Tago' MacDonald & Scott Macaulay. Dan Crossley returned to the starting line up and Calum Iain Macleod made his first start for the team, at right back. Andy 'VP' Macleod, Paul Forster and manager Kevin Anderson were on the bench, none of whom had an appearance to his name this season, highlighting the threadbare nature of the squad at present.

With the management team's advice no doubt ringing in their ears after somehow snatching defeat from the jaws of victory in Lochs last week, Carlway started the match shooting towards the school end and dominated the opening exchanges, without really testing the home keeper. Dan Crossley tried to weave his way through the tight midfield on 9 minutes, and played a neat one-two with Murdo 'Squeg' Macleod, but couldn't find the target.

Macleod then presented Kevin 'Gogan' Macleod with a half chance which cleared the bar.

Harris took the lead after 14 minutes with their first real opportunity, when an innocuous ball wasn't dealt with properly by the visiting defence, who then allowed Kieran Mulhearn too much space to lift the ball over David Beaton with a cool finish from the edge of the box.

Carloway were stung by this setback and immediately went up the park searching for an equaliser. Just two minutes after falling behind, Gus Maciver played the ball to Kenny 'Dokus' MacDonald out on the right. MacDonald's cross into the home box struck a hand and referee 'Chancy' Macleod had no hesitation in awarding the visitors a penalty. Dan Crossley stepped up to take it, but his shot was well saved by Harris goalkeeper Macrae low to his left hand side.

The visitors continued to probe and Kenny 'Dokus' MacDonald found the side netting with a shot on 20 minutes. However, Harris were clearly buoyed by their early goal and a dangerous free kick had to be headed to safety by Andrew 'Tago' Maciver. From the resultant corner, a free header really ought to have seen the Carloway net bulge for a second time.

The home side had another opportunity on 24 minutes when a long kick out by Macrae was touched on and eventually scrambled for a corner. A minute later, Harris went 2-0 in front when Mark Morrison split the defence running on to a through ball and lobbed Beaton with aplomb. Carloway were really up against it now.

Na Gormaich continued to take the game to Harris. On 29 minutes, a well placed free kick into the Harris box by Gus Maciver was begging to be put away. A minute later, Andrew 'Tago' Maciver headed narrowly over the bar after a pass from Donnie Macphail. In the 34th minute, another free kick by Gus Maciver was headed on towards goal by Kevin 'Gogan' Macleod. The Harris keeper couldn't gather cleanly but Kenny 'Dokus' MacDonald couldn't take advantage.

Domhnall Mackay then played a clever ball up to Kevin 'Gogan' who managed to round the home keeper, but was taken wide to his right. His cut back was cleared by the hard-pressed home defence. Good close control from Dan Crossley provided another opportunity for Kevin 'Gogan' Macleod but his low drive flashed just wide of the post.

In the 38th minute the match took a dramatic twist. Another forward surge by Carloway wasn't cleared and with Dan Crossley poised to knock the loose ball into the net, it was handled on the line by Ali Morrison. Despite the howls of protest from the home ranks, the referee was left with no option but to award Carloway a second penalty and brandish a red card to the 16 year old defender, son of Hearnach stalwart Angus 'Nigger' Morrison. Captain Domhnall Mackay assumed the penalty taking duties and halved the deficit with a well drilled shot low to the keeper's right. 2-1 and game on now.

Gus Maciver was next in the referee's notebook for handling on the bye line near the corner flag. Two minutes later, Carloway had the ball in the net again when Dan Crossley finished off a neat pass from Murdo 'Squeg' Macleod, but he was adjudged offside. Then, with half time approaching, a Carloway corner was cleared to half way, where a Harris striker took advantage of a rare error by Gus Maciver and headed for goal. However, he was forced wide and the chance was lost.

Half time: Harris 2 Carloway 1

The half time interval allowed the home side to re-organise following their numerical disadvantage. Carloway, on the other hand, were looking to capitalise on this and try to open up the home side on a very tight pitch. In the opening minute of the second half, Na Gormaich created another chance when the ever-improving DI MacIennan crossed to Kenny 'Dokus' MacDonald who hit the side netting. This was followed by forceful midfield play from Andrew 'Tago' Maciver picking up the ball, playing a neat one-two and crossing to Kevin 'Gogan' whose shot was blocked.

Carloway sensed blood, and in the 50th minute parity was restored when an exquisite arcing Murdo 'Squeg' cross from the right wing was met gleefully by Andrew 'Tago' Maciver around 12 yards out to head into the net. It was now 2-2 and The Blues were looking for a third. Six minutes later, and a dangerous free kick from Harris was cleared at the second attempt. It was played long for Kevin 'Gogan' to utilise his pace and power to race past defender Kieran Mulhearn. As Macleod bore down on goal and prepared to shoot, Mulhearn clearly brought him down and Carloway had a third penalty. The only question was what colour of card would the referee opt for this time? He considered a yellow card sufficient punishment, on account of another Harris defender being close by, and may have been able to make a covering tackle. Kevin 'Gogan' Macleod also received a yellow card for his unorthodox celebration of the penalty award. Despite Harris protests at the award, Domhnall Mackay kept his nerve and coolly dispatched his second penalty of the evening to give The Blues a 3-2 lead.

The visitors were well on top and dominating the match, as you might expect with an extra man. Harris keeper Macrae misplaced a back pass to the feet of Kenny 'Dokus' MacDonald. He and Dan Crossley tried to engineer some space, but couldn't convert the opportunity. In the 65th minute, Crossley's corner on the right was nodded out to the right hand edge of the box and fell to right back Calum Iain Macleod. His well struck low, drilled shot fizzed just past the post with a slight deflection from a Harris foot.

Macleod had an eventful few minutes after this. Firstly, he was the victim of a late body check which went unpunished and shortly after seeming to have recovered; he appeared to pull up injured. He was replaced on 72 minutes by Andy 'VP' Macleod. Paul Forster then came into the fray for Kenny 'Dokus' MacDonald after 77 minutes after MacDonald also seemed to be struggling.

In 80 minutes, a long kick out by David Beaton almost played in Kevin 'Gogan' Macleod, but Macrae raced out of his goal and got just enough on the ball to clear the danger.

One goal leads are only secure after the final whistle has been sounded and in the last 10 minutes Harris strained every sinew as they sensed the match was not yet lost. In the 82nd minute, a Harris free kick was pumped into the box and really ought to have been finished off, but the snap shot screwed wide of Beaton's upright and was a real let off for Carloway. However, having dragged themselves into a winning position coming back from 2-0 down, they were caught out again in injury time when a soft free kick just inside the Carloway half was played into the box. The keeper was unable to collect it and, with Carloway failing to clear the danger, the ball ended up in the net. No one in the home ranks even tried to claim the goal, suggesting the last touch was off a Carloway player.

There was still enough time for one last chance for Carloway. Dan Crossley almost rescued the evening for The Blues but couldn't quite squeeze the ball home.

Carloway will be hugely frustrated at not being able to see the game out, having turned around a two goal deficit. Once again, too many opportunities were spurned and Harris provided the real sting in the tail with their late, late leveller. The Hearrachs deserve great credit for refusing to capitulate despite playing for over 50 minutes with 10 men, and conceding three penalties. They belied their lowly league position with a spirited display.

Goal scoring is not merely the responsibility of the strikers. As Spain aptly demonstrated at the Euro 2012 tournament, it doesn't matter whether you play with three 'out and out' strikers or none, it's putting the ball in the back of the net that makes the difference between success and failure.

Na Gormaich must now simply focus on their next match, the small matter of a visit to neighbours and rivals Westside, and hope that they can regain their winning habit.

PS - It seems that following his red card during the match, young Ali Morrison had to endure another 'walk of shame' by being sent around the ground during the second half collecting the gate money. One wonders whether Cobby would consider imposing such a sanction to any Carloway players suffering the same fate at Cnoc a Choilich?

Carloway man of the match – Andrew 'Tago' Maciver