

Moldova Lewis Cup Final:

West Side 3 (2) Carloway 3 (1) (After extra-time)

Carloway won 4-3 on penalties.

Martainn Shields 30, 38 (both pens.) Kenny "Dokus" Macdonald 4
Donald "Spike" Smith 63 Andrew "Tago" Maciver 49
Calum Tom Moody 78

Ref.: D.J.Maclean (Barvas).
At Col Uarach.
Friday, 7.9.12.

David Beaton

Seumas Macleod Calum Tom Moody Gus Maciver Donald "D.I." MacIennan
Kenny "Dokus" Macdonald Domhnall Mackay(capt.) Billy Anderson☒ Murdo "Sgweg"
Macleod Dan Crossley

Kevin "Gochan" Macleod☒

Subs.: Andrew "Tago" Maciver (Donald "D.I." MacIennan) 45; Ali "Tolsta" Maciver (Murdo
"Sqweg" Macleod) 62; Donnie Macphail (Kenny "Dokus" Macdonald) 90.

Yellow cards: Billy Anderson 18; Kevin "Gochan" Macleod 95.

Andy "Barvas" Macleod☒ Scott Graham

Dan Macphail☒ Donald "Spike" Smith (capt.) Ali Williamson Gordon Campbell Martainn
Shields
Campbell Macdonald Duncan Maclean Donnie "No" Smith
Peter Macaskill

Subs.: Innes Iain Morrison (Donnie "No" Smith) 49; D.J.Macleod (Andy "Barvas" Macleod)
55.

Yellow cards: Dan Macphail 18; Andy "Barvas" Macleod 55.

At last, the closing contest of the 2012 Lewis and Harris Season, after a final week which had witnessed a peripatetic journey by Carloway from Coop Cup glory at Garrabost last Saturday, through League misery at Fivepenny, to a venue of mixed memories for the Blues, mostly painful, Col Uarach. Success in the Coop Cup had certainly removed an enormous weight from the players' shoulders and drowned the supporters in an ocean of relief. The curse had been lifted, it seemed. However, would this make the task any easier against the awkward squad from Barvas who had already edged victory over the Blues earlier in the season, 2-1, in the EaF Final, and who were gradually establishing themselves as the Cup performers du jour?

Availability favoured na Gormaich: as with last week, Cup Final appearances seem to have a massive curative effect at Cnoc a' Choilich on the afflicted. For once, freshness and preferred tactics could determine choice. Delight at the absence of the opposition's pacy predator, D.J.Clinton (suspension), and the best right-winger in Lewis, Ali "Barvas" Macleod (shoulder injury), led to Gus Maciver following Scott Graham, with Moody holding the line as Andy "Barvas" lay deep. In the engine room Mackay, "Sqweg" and Anderson went

head-to-head with "Spike", Campbell and Macphail, with Williamson defensive ring shield. Shields, Crossley, and "Dokus" lay wide to run, while Maclean and Macdonald had the unenviable task of tracking the tireless irritant, "Gochan".

A mild evening, with a coldish northerly, brought out a healthy attendance to see Carloway make the initial running: "Dokus" and Crossley pressuring wide, Anderson and "Sqweg" pushing through the centre, "Gochan" seeking the key. And it came in 4 minutes. A Carloway sweep down the right ended with the ball breaking across West's goal; Macdonald couldn't control it to the left and Crossley won the loose ball, carried it towards the bye-line, then cut it back. Anderson's dummy threw the line, and "Dokus" coming in at the far post thrashed a left-foot hook high inside Macaskill's left-hand post from 8 metres. (1-0)

Moments later, it could have been level, as "Barvas" eluded his marker left. His perfect cross found an unmarked Graham arriving high in the centre, to power a header low from 10 metres, but a miraculous block by the spreading Beaton somehow diverted the ball out to the left. An incredible save! Graham was left shaking his head in disbelief.

On 10 minutes a "Dokus" free-kick from 20 metres cleared the bar before the expected war of attrition developed in midfield as "No" got the measure of "Dokus" while Crossley sank deeper to support "D.I." handle the awakening Shields. Macdonald let him go. On 24 minutes a Crossley run did see him supply "Dokus" in the centre but he was blocked 12 metres from goal. A minute later Carloway broke fast out of defence and "Dokus" raced into West's box, then slipped the ball right to the arriving Macleod, 8 metres from goal and clear, but the ball bobbed just at the wrong moment and spun away from him. Then, on the half-hour, it was all to play for when a Macphail shot from 22 metres to the left of the box struck the blocking Maciver's upper left arm/shoulder; Shields was coolness itself as he stroked a low penalty to Beaton's left. (1-1)

Eight minutes later a West cross from the left, 16 metres from the bye-line, was cleared out but quickly returned into the left of the box, catching Maciver off-balance. Andy "Barvas" was beating Beaton to the ball when the keeper bundled him to the ground. This time Shields stroked it just inside the right-hand post. (1-2)

The Blues could barely believe where they were but on 42 minutes forced the final chance of the half. "Dokus" tricked his way down the right, cut square across the box, 12 metres out, and found "Gochan", facing him in the centre. Under pressure, he turned a right-foot shot in which Macaskill's got down brilliantly to his right to push round the post.

Half-time: West Side 2 Carloway 1

Containment did not present much difficulty for either side. Midfield control was the key: the central power of "Pongo" replaced "D.I." Minutes later, the

Siarachs responded with Morrison replacing "No". However, simultaneously, Kevin Anderson's gamble paid dividends. A Carloway attack was repulsed right; in the scramble by the wing "Gochan" held to cross, 10 metres from the goal-line, and "Tago" met the ball at the near post to head down strongly inside Macaskill's left-hand post from 8 metres. (2-2)

Neither side dominated, though the Blues' powerful pack in the middle was denying West movement through the centre; the pace of Shields remained a problem on the right, however. The balance of chances still favoured Carloway, nevertheless. On 59 minutes a throw-in on the right, close to the bye-line, led to a cross being blocked out to "Dokus", 12 metres out in front of goal, but his drive lacked power.

The arrival of "Tolsta" for "Sqweg" signalled Kevin Anderson's metamorphosis from Arsene Wenger into Sam Allardyce, as na Gormaich forsook the short-ball approach for the long diagonal to exploit the pace of "Gochan" and Crossley, but immediately the Siarachs contrived to stun the Blues again. Carloway cleared a West advance on the left out their right. The ball was played back to Macdonald, on the left touch line, just inside the half. He took one step back, then sent a nightmarish head-high diagonal with his right foot across the Carloway goal, where "Spike" led the retreating line to help it on, 10 metres out, with a back head-flip across goal and just inside the far post. A weak goal to lose but "Spike's" fastest reaction earned it. (2-3)

The last twenty minutes saw Carloway desperately seek to equalize: on 69 minutes a "Tolsta" corner on the left bobbed around the West 6-metre box, before a looping header from "Tago" bounced on the bar and over. A minute later Macaskill was injured blocking a 20-metre "Dokus" drive from the left, then Williamson blocked "Gochan's" attempted conversion on the line. "Dokus" had just volleyed over from 20 metres after a corner on the right when the saver for the Blues arrived, and what a beauty it was. Gus Maciver won the ball midway within his own half, in the centre, then surged forwards rightwards on a mazy run, before sending a soaring diagonal across the retreating line, for Moody, arriving to a rising roar from the crowd, to bullet home with his head from 12 metres. (3-3)

A tense stalemate now descended on the tie, which would last to the end of extra-time, as each player sought to avoid the blunder which might lose the game. Then, on 85 minutes, a "Dokus" slip through the middle sent "Gochan" into the West box, trailing defenders like a comet's tail. Veering left, he flicked a right-foot rocket over Macaskill from 12 metres - and the bar!

Full-time: West Side. 3 Carloway. 3

A curtailed extra-time of 20 minutes saw few chances. After 2 minutes an Anderson free-kick from the centre circle was headed over, before Macleod headed a corner over from an Anderson corner on the left. On 12 minutes a carefully-struck Duncan Maclean free-kick, 20 metres out on the right touch line, was curled 2 metres outside the near post. With 5 minutes left, the final chance from an Anderson cross from the left saw "Tago" drive over from 10

metres.

And so, for the second time in a week, the nail-biting torture of penalties had to be endured, and, once again, when the runes were cast, they spelled out the name, "Carlabhagh,"

West Side.

Martainn Shields	1-0
Dan Macphail	X 1-1
Duncan Maclean	X 2-1
D.J. Macleod	3-2
Innes Iain Morrison	3-3

Carloway.

Dan Crossley	1-1
Domhnall Mackay	2-1
Andrew "Tago" Maciver	3-1
Seumas Macleod	X 3-2
Calum Tom Moody	4-3

West Side Man of the Match: Duncan Maclean.

Carloway Man of the Match: Kevin "Gochan" Macleod