

Highland Amateur Cup Round 2:

## Harris 1 (1) Carloway 7 (5)

Zander Young 17      Kevin "Gochan" Macleod 1 min. 24 secs.  
Kevin "Barra" Macneil 2 mins. 54 secs.  
Scott Macaulay 22  
Calum Tom Moody 28  
Domhnall Mackay 40  
Fraser Macleod 55, 90+3

Friday, 17.5.13

Ref.: Murdo Macaulay (Lochs).

At Rally Park, Tarbert.

David Beaton

Calum Tom Moody    Gus Maciver    Donald "D.I." MacIennan

Kevin "Gochan" Macleod    Domhnall Mackay(capt.)    Murdo "Sqweg" Macleod    Kevin "Barra" Macneil    Dan Crossley

Scott Macaulay Fraser Macleod

Subs.: Cameron "Tiger" MacArthur (Donald "D.I." MacIennan) 45; Craig Hacker (Dan Crossley) 45; James Anderson (Scott Macaulay) 70; Colin Maclean (Murdo "Sqweg" Macleod) 72.

Sub. not used: Billy Anderson.

After the febrile intensity of an enthralling West Lewis derby, a tired Carloway had to travel south once more (the second of FOUR times this season!) to overcome Harris and win the chance to take on the big boys in the first open round of the HAC. In their earlier League visit, on the opening day of the season, they had eventually prevailed 4-0, after initial difficulty with chance conversion, but as the game had progressed, the gun sights had been more and more finely calibrated and "Gochan", "Dokus", Fraz Mac, and "Barra" had all registered.

Zander Young and the Morrisons had been swamped in midfield that night, but tonight injury and absence necessitated change in this department: Seumas Macleod was unavailable, while Kenny "Dokus" Macdonald was still experiencing back problems, and hamstring concerns relegated much-missed Billy Anderson (Carloway's Man of the Match in that game) to the bullpen, alongside Cameron "Tiger" MacArthur, Craig Hacker, Colin Maclean, and James Anderson. The final four would all feature at some point. However, Domhnall Mackay, an absentee in April, returned and young star, Kevin "Barra" Macneil, had justified his first start, to the captain's left in midfield.

Ah, yes. The Blues' traditional explosive starts! The last year has enjoyed all sorts of new records down Carloway way. Tonight the fans must surely have witnessed another. Initial scrappy play led to na Gormaich gaining possession on the left, midway within their own half. The ball was rapidly switched forward to "Barra" breaking into the Harris half; he checked, then squared right to the arriving Mackay, who turned right, looked up, then sent a beautiful right-foot curler between stopper and left-back for "Gochan" to move unmarked into the right of the Hearach box. He weighed up his options, then sent an exquisite low right-footer across the advancing "Gress" and inside the far post (0-1).

Harris came forward, lost possession, and Carloway raced downfield to win a corner on the right. The ball was cleared to "Sqweg", moving to 18 metres from the bye-line, to the right of the box. His diagonal return allowed "Barra" to outjump the pack, 12 metres out in front of goal, and nod low inside "Gress's" left-hand post (0-2). Fewer than three minutes were on the clock.

Understandably, a bewildered Harris rearguard lost shape, and as their midfield was repeatedly over-run, heavy defeat loomed. On 9 minutes a straight defence-splitter from "Sqweg" sent Macaulay through the line but he mishit his left-foot strike from 16 metres well to the left. A minute later "Gochan", in oceans of empty space on the right, saw "Gress" beat away his right-

foot drive for a corner on his left. From the corner, the ball broke to Fraser Macleod, but the keeper smothered his attempt from 10 metres.

After 15 minutes Harris finally got forward, with Scott Morrison(?) coming through the middle, to lay off left. A turn inwards to the edge of the box gave them their first scoring opportunity but the drive cleared the bar by a metre. Then a stroke of luck for the Hearachs: a free-kick on the centre of the halfway line was punted forward by Young, but as Beaton came for it, a rush of players across his line of sight, distracted the keeper from the descending, swirling ball, and it hit his right shoulder and bounced home from 12 metres (1-2).

But Harris's spirits only rose for five minutes. An early ball left from Moody sent Crossley off on a mazy run down to the bye-line, before turning in to supply Fraz Mac square, in front of goal, 12 metres out. Amazingly, "Gress" blocked his shot to his left, but could do nothing to stop Macaulay following up to convert (1-3).

On 27 minutes neat play allowed "Barra" to fire over from 20 metres before the evening started to spiral away from the Hearachs totally. Another Crossley run led to a corner on the left. Macaulay's corner came across perfectly for Moody to meet it 14 metres out by the far post and reverse-head strongly across "Gress" and inside his right-hand post (1-4).

Harris must have empathised with King Canute at this moment, unable to quell a tide with any organised opposition; the way Carlaway once felt playing an Andy Murray-inspired Lochs. On the half-hour another Crossley run the length of the left ended with a right-foot slice wide to the right from 20 metres. Four minutes later a Mackay forward-splitter sent Macaulay into the left of the Harris box but, yet again, "Gress" blocked for a corner on his right. Next, a "Sqweg" free-kick on the right, 29 metres from the bye-line was met by "Gochan" in front of goal, but "Gress" read it and held his effort from 14 metres safely.

However, he could do nothing four minutes later when a Carlaway break on the right saw "Sqweg" supply the arriving Mackay to turn in 16 metres from goal and surprise the keeper with an early right-foot toe-poke low to his left (1-5). On the stroke of half-time, Fraz Mac wall-passed to "Sqweg" midway within the Hearach half, then ran on unmarked behind the line into the box. "Gress" reacted fast, to make himself big to pull off a miraculous block, and the ball spun away over the bar. From Macaulay's corner, Moody once more headed strongly from 12 metres, directly in front of goal but the keeper again rescued the home side, somehow batting the ball away off the line to his right.

Half-Time: Harris 1 Carlaway 5.

Circumstances permitted the Blues' coaching team to blood other squad members, Hacker and MacArthur immediately replacing Crossley and Maclennan. Harris's tactics fed this confidence: a zonal high back four behind a leaderless midfield repeatedly lost "Gochan" wide right and retreating trequartista Macaulay, while Mackay and "Sqweg" surged at will to provide diagonal or high forward to the racing "Gochan", Fraz Mac, and Crossley. Harris's main threat stemmed from high free-kicks forward, usually from Young, but they lacked a forceful target man and rarely looked like testing Beaton, never mind scoring.

Carlaway were happy to open in third gear, retaining possession in pack-like pattern play, then breaking at will. On 55 minutes this method brought further reward. A mighty "Sqweg" free-kick from the central halfway line carried through to a backing-to-goal Fraser Macleod, who simply nodded a low header sideways to the right of a helpless keeper from 8 metres (1-6).

On the hour another totalvoetbal passing sequence on the right bemused the Hearachs as "Sqweg" was freed to release Macaulay on the right but his cross was deflected for a corner,

from which Mackay, at the nearside post, 12 metres out mishit past on the right. Five minutes later yet another deep "Sqweg" free-kick from the left halfway line zoomed in just too fast for Macaulay at the far post.

The pace, however, was dropping, the match now resembling a bounce game. On 69 minutes Mackay again supplied a straight Johnny Giles ball for Fraz Mac to sweep on to à la Alan Smith but again "Gress" read his slip to block to his right. More substitutes, four in all by Carloway under HAC rules, enhanced the training-ground atmosphere. On 71 minutes a clearance to the left touch-line was chased by Fraz Mac, and his whipped-back low diagonal flew across the Harris goal and under "Gress's" attempted right-foot boot-out, but, thankfully for the keeper, beyond the far post. Five minutes on, the tall striker chipped over from 16 metres, after being supplied square by Anderson off a "Sqweg" forward through ball.

Two minutes later Harris did reply when a Young free-kick from 26 metres broke right and a right-foot rocket from the left edge of the Blues' box cleared the corner of bar and post, but the flow of the game was still relentlessly towards Andy Macleod. A Mackay pass squared from the right saw Hacker fire over from 22 metres, before a corner returned to "Barra" on the left saw his return break out to Moody to smash wide of "Gress's" right-hand post.

Deep in added-on time, with 10-man na Gormaich having lost Maciver to a professional foul, a Moody free-kick from 24 metres found Fraz Mac on the right to fire across the 6-metre line but just beyond the rushing "Gochan" at the far post. At the death, a tireless "Gochan" once more drove down the right, turned into the box, and his low cross reached the unmarked Macleod by the far post, to fire a right-footer home from 10 metres (1-7).

Full-Time: Harris 1 Carloway 7

The opening three minutes defined the progress of the evening, of course. Invention and early precision proved vital and, apart from the briefest of spells following the Hearach goal, the eventual winner was never in doubt. Harris were a shadow of their opening day force, when Johnny Porter, the Macdonalds, and Benn Esslemont mounted a creditable early defence before Zander Young and the Morrisons were gradually overrun in midfield by a Billy Anderson-inspired Blues' half-back line and overall team shape, and the game, were lost.

A major difference tonight was being two goals down in three minutes: without a recognisable strike force, their midfield was placed under double pressure, by their fired-up opposite numbers abetted by unpressured Carloway defenders. All shape was soon lost, and play became rooted in the Harris half. Profligacy in front of goal, plus the brilliance of Andy Macleod, averted embarrassment. In the Isle of Harris Inn après-ski there should have been joy unbounded among the Carloway faithful - another worthy victory; Round 3 of the HAC achieved; a few further trophies in the boardroom - but the atmosphere was more suggestive of Hitler's bunker, Berlin 1945, than jubilant. A serious ankle injury to Gus Maciver, Carloway's own personal Franco Baresi, added to upcoming 2-match suspensions for Captain Courageous, Domhnall Mackay, and "Gochan", means early season pressure on an already narrow squad. Tonight's substitutes may be about to experience more first-team action than they once expected!

Harris Man of the Match: Andy "Gress" Macleod.  
Carloway Man of the Match: Domhnall Mackay.