

Highland Amateur Cup Round 3

Avoch (2) 3 Carloway (0) 2

Gary Urquhart 30, 89 Fraser Macleod 57
Ronnie Jones 39 Scott Macaulay 82

David Beaton

Donald 'DI' MacLennan Seumas Macleod Calum Tom Moody
Kevin 'Gochan' Macleod Kenny 'Dokus' MacDonald Domhnall Mackay (capt.) Murdo
'Squeg' Macleod Dan Crossley
Fraser Macleod Scott Macaulay

Subs (not used): Ben Smith, Cameron 'Tiger' Macarthur, Colin Maclean, Kevin 'Barra' Macneil
Yellow cards: Donald 'DI' MacLennan, Calum Tom Moody, Dan Crossley

At Culbokie Football Ground
Saturday 1 June 2013
Ref : John Bicknell

For the second time in three seasons, the HAC draw had paired Carloway with Avoch FC, currently the most successful HAC side of recent years. Having lost 3-1 in the semi final in 2011, Carloway were both keen and confident that they could avenge the result of two years ago. As such, two buses of expectant supporters, club officials and players made the journey to Culbokie to try to redress the balance.

The ranks of the travelling support were further swelled by the "ex pats" living in and around Inverness and the Black Isle resulting in one of the best crowds ever seen at this stage of the competition, according to Ness FC chairman Kenny "Flip" Macleod.

With Billy Anderson declaring himself unfit to play (thigh muscle injury) the Carloway management made little change to the line up which featured against Back last Monday night. The previously suspended duo of Domhnall Mackay and Kevin "Gochan" Macleod returned to the line up replacing Anderson and Kevin "Barra" MacNeil, who was amongst the substitutes.

Within the first few minutes of the kick off Carloway were on the backfoot – a corner was conceded and as the ball fell in the box Avoch's tall and gangly centre back Sinclair Patience, who was subsequently to prove instrumental in his teams victory on the day, to the relief of the Carloway support managed to hook the ball over the bar from only eight yards out despite having a clear sight of goal. What a let off!!

However, Carloway managed to withstand the initial spell of Avoch pressure and on the five minute mark "Fraz Mac", out on the right wing, sent a waist-high cross across the face of the Avoch goal, having spotted the onrushing Kenny "Dokus", but keeper Campbell confidently plucked the ball out of the air to avert any danger. Carloway then began to gain a foothold in the game and on the 10th and 11th minutes Kevin Gochan twice headed over the bar from a Murdo Squeg free kick and a cross from "Fraz Mac" who had

dispossessed an Avoch defender outside the eighteen yard box.

In the 15th minute Murdo Squeg, out on the left flank 10 yards from the touch line sent an inch perfect pass down the channel between the Avoch right back and his central defensive partner for Scott Macaulay to run onto. Macaulay's power and pace outstripped the Avoch defence, got him to the touchline and into the eighteen yard box but his left foot cross was poor and the ball ricocheted off an Avoch defender, standing in the six yard box, for a corner. From Kenny Docus's weak corner, another corner was won and this time after an aerial scramble the ball landed at Macaulay's feet but his snap shot from 6 yards out hit an onrushing Avoch defender.

Carloway by this time had the upper hand and continued to press forward- a DI Maclennan cross, in the 22nd minute, out on the left, just inside the Avoch half found an unmarked "Fraz Mac" at the corner of the 18 yard box but unfortunately his header was weak and it went wide of the left hand post. The Carloway pressure began to mount and on the 25th minute Dan Crossley broke from midfield reached the Avoch 18 yard box and with the goal at his mercy somehow contrived to put the ball too far out of his reach and it ran harmlessly away from him over the touch line. On the 28th minute another corner from Carloway resulted in Calum Tom Moody attempting an overhead kick which went wide of the Avoch right hand post.

Having sustained some 25 minutes of Carloway pressure, in the 30th minute Avoch got the break of the ball and broke forward. A right foot pass from Patience found Sutherland on the left wing 10 yards from the touchline, he ran with the ball towards the 18 yard box fending off the attentions of DI ,he then turned back dinked the ball two yards into the path of Mark Gair, who with a one touch pass set up Shaun Kerr who shot with his left foot at goal, the ball was expertly blocked by the onrushing Beaton but the subsequent rebound found Gary Urquhart unmarked and with an open goal and from five yards out he slotted the ball into the net and Carloway were behind in a match for the first time this season **(1-0)**

This goal deflated Carloway and rejuvenated Avoch who almost got a second within two minutes of scoring their first when Stuart Kerr turned Moody in the box but despite having a clear view of goal his shot went wide. Although Avoch held the upper hand for the remainder of the first half, Carloway, courtesy of "Fraz Mac", did have two efforts on the Avoch goal in this period but his efforts did not really trouble Campbell in the Avoch goal

Then on the 40th minute further disappointment for Carloway as Avoch won a corner, the corner from Carloway's right hand side was driven over with pace and met by Ronnie Jones whose glancing header found the bottom corner to Beaton's left. **(2 -0)**

On the 43rd minute there was more danger for Carloway as an Avoch free kick from the left sailed over the Carloway defence to be met by Stevie Pirie running into the six yard box, at the back post, but fortunately for Carloway his header hit the just underneath the top corner of the post. This turned out

to be the only bit of action of note until the referee blew the whistle for half time

Half Time Avoch 2 Carloway 0

After some tentative early exchanges the beginning of the second half Carloway began to gain a foothold and although no clear cut chances were created they began to exert some pressure on the Avoch rearguard and win some corners. In the 50th minute a left foot cross from Kenny Docus out on the right had to be cleared for a corner by Paul Gair just when it appeared that the onrushing Fraz Mac was set to score. Then in the 55th minute Kenny Docus picked up the ball in midfield ran up the right hand side touchline swung in a right footed cross which "Fraz Mac's" head failed to connect to by the smallest of margins and the ball had to be cleared by Macallister for a corner.

Finally in the 57th minute a break for Carloway as Martin Macallister misjudged a pass back to his keeper, the ever alert "Fraz Mac" pounced and thundered the ball past the onrushing Campbell into the Avoch net from 10 yards **(2-1)**

There were further opportunities created in the 70th and 75th minutes: Calum Tom won a header, knocked it down to Kenny Docus who shot just over from 25 yards out. Then from another Docus cross "Fraz Mac" headed the ball into the path of Crossley who from 18 yards out shot narrowly past the Avoch left hand post.

Carloway continued to press and in the 82nd minute Gochan won the ball in the midfield played it back six yards to Domhnall Mackay who took one touch, picked out "Fraz Mac" (out on the right wing) with an inch perfect forty yard pass just behind the Avoch backline. "Fraz Mac" expertly brought it under control with one touch played it five yards ahead of him, and whilst fending off the attention of two defenders sent a cross over from the right; the ball went past and behind Kenny Docus, standing in the centre on the six yard line ,who attempted a virtually impossible back flick into the net, however the contact was enough to slow the momentum of the ball and it fell in front of the lurking Macaulay, at the back post ,who had the simple job of tapping it into the net from three yards **(2-2)**

Then in the 89th minute Avoch won a throw in, five yard from the touchline and the resultant throw in by Wilson, from the left hand side, found Paul Gair on the touchline, he hooked the ball over and it found Gary Urquhart who outjumped Murdo Squeq to put the ball back across the face of the Carloway goal down into Beaton's left hand corner. **(3-2)**

As the Avoch team, to a man, ran towards, not to the Avoch support but the Carloway support to "noise them up" (*repayment for the good natured banter exchanged and the "advice" they had received throughout the game*) we had the bizarre sight of the Avoch manager, George Patience, running from the far side touchline to the nearside touchline to join his team in celebrating what

was to prove to be the decisive goal, reflecting no doubt the relief felt in the Avoch camp that the game was not going to extra time.

This game turned out to be both an exciting and exhilarating match and was a great advert for Highland amateur football. Every player on both teams played their part in making it such an enthralling contest

For Avoch their strikers Gary Urquhart (No 10) and Shaun Kerr (No 9), midfield maestro Ronnie Jones (No 8), full back Mark Gair (No 3) and centre back Sinclair Patience (11) stood out just that bit more than their team mates.

For Carloway it is very difficult to single out an individual or individuals as everyone gave their all in a gutsy, skilful and determined performance and they are all to be commended that collectively as a team they stuck together and did not succumb after going down 2 -0 but in the second half patiently continued to take the game to Avoch, got back into it, and then fate cruelly took it away from them in the dying minutes of the game. **C'est la vie!** Such is football!

One cannot finish the report without giving credit to the Carloway fans who were at the game in great numbers and who provided such great vocal support and encouragement. Their clapping and back slapping of their team as they left the park not only reflected their appreciation of the players contribution to making it such a spectacle but also reflected that their team to a man had given their all throughout.

As well as the travelling fans the mainland based regulars made their usual appearances: Ali "Calum Turag", Kenny "Wellies" Macaskill, Duncan Tom, Jacob (Breasclete), Christine Craigie (and her husband Iain Forbes) to name a few and one cannot omit to mention the former Carloway stalwart and captain Iain "Biodach" Mackay (who once again supplied the after match beers!) and whose enthusiasm and support for the Club is no less dimmed now than when he played those many years ago.

Carloway Man of the Match : Scott Macaulay

Avoch Man of the Match : Sinclair Patience