

Lewis and Harris League:

Carloway 2 (0) Athletic 0 (0)

Domhnall Mackay 79

Fraser Macleod (pen.) 87

At Cnoc a Choilich.

Wednesday, 26.6.13.

Ref.: George Macaskill

David Beaton

Calum Tom Moody Gus Maciver Donald "DI" MacIennan

*Kevin "Gochan" Macleod Domhnall Mackay (capt.) Billy Anderson Murdo "Squegg" Macleod Dan Crossley
Scott Macaulay Fraser Macleod*

Subs.: Seumas Macleod (Billy Anderson) 71; Darren Mackinnon (Kevin "Gochan" Macleod) 88, Kenny "Dokus" MacDonald (Scott Macaulay) 88

Subs. not used: Kevin "Barra" Macneil, Phil Macleod

Yellow Cards: Murdo "Squegg" Macleod, Gus Maciver, Billy Anderson, Seumas Macleod, Kevin "Gochan" Macleod

The big games keep coming for Carloway. This time the visitors being Athletic trying to maintain their unbeaten league run. Carloway had lost their perfect start to their league campaign having drawn 3-3 on the Monday night with Point. That result had placed even more importance on this game for Carloway.

On a perfect evening for football a large crowd turned up eagerly anticipating this top of the league contest. The pitch as usual was immaculate; the perfect playing surface prepared by groundsman George Spy. Both teams lined up in their favoured 3-5-2 formations with DI MacIennan making a return in defence after an injury lay-off. This meant that Seumas Macleod rather unluckily found himself relegated to the bench. In Athletic's line-up was that former Carloway stalwart Donnie Macphail The referee for the night being the normally lenient George Macaskill.

Top of the table clashes normally tend to be very tense affairs. Although this game only marked the halfway stage of the season this game would be no different. Both teams playing the same formation cancelled each other out. The wing backs, very important players in this formation, seemed reluctant to break forward which in turn placed more pressure on the midfield players to create chances.

On 5 minutes the first real opportunity fell to Carloway, after a defensive mix-up. However the Aths defence recovered quickly to clear. On 8 minutes good work by Scott Macaulay created an opportunity only for the ball to be cleared to the Aths' Scott Maciver. Heart in the mouth time for the large Carloway support and the first shout of the night of "tackle him" from DR (former Carloway player, official and long standing supporter). Scott's run from the halfway line culminated in a cross which was scrambled clear for a corner.

After 10 minutes Aths were awarded a free kick about 25 yards from goal in the inside left position. The free kick taken by Gary Macleod found its way past the wall and forced Beaton into a sharp save, the loose ball being eventually cleared to safety.

The first booking of the evening came on 22 minutes for Murdo "Squegg" and then the first bit of controversy of the game. A cross from the left arrived at Scott Macaulay and he appeared to be pushed from the back. No penalty was the verdict of referee Macaskill although from this reporter's vantage point Scott seemed to have a good case.

After this the game settled down. Both teams enjoying equal possession and most of the

chances created were by the respective Scotts. The Aths version creating a chance out of nothing on 29 minutes but his cross found no takers. Not to be undone the Carloway version went on a mazy run but pulled his shot wide when maybe the best option would have been to pass to Fraser Macleod who was free in acres of space.

Meantime, the normally lenient Macaskill had booked both Gus Maciver and DJ Clinton both of which were the correct decision.

The final opportunity of the half fell to Elliot Ruddall but his 20 yard shot was well saved by Beaton

Half time: Carloway 0 Athletic 0

The second half brought about a distinct change in the pattern of the game. The Aths midfield started to dominate with the Carloway midfield struggling against the movement of Ruddall and Robert Jones and the guile of Donnie Macphail. However the Aths wingbacks were still struggling to get forward and therefore the few chances that were created were from long range shots that were comfortably dealt with by Beaton. The Carloway defensive trio of Moody, Maciver and Macleannan were absolutely outstanding during this period.

Because Aths were struggling to create, they increasingly started to hit hopeful balls to Scott Maciver. In recent years much has been written that the only tactic employed by the former Rangers manager Scott Symon was "Gie the ball to Jim" (Baxter). Increasingly and ominously for Aths, their only tactic seemed to be "Gie the ball to Scott."

The normally lenient Macaskill had fast become the very strict Macaskill by administering further bookings to Billy Anderson and Stephen Clinton. By the end of the game he would have handed out another three further bookings to Gochan (no surprise), Seumas Macleod and Ruddall making it 8 in total, an increase of about 500% on his normal quota. There were going to be two of us doing an awful lot of writing after this game.

It was also becoming obvious that the Carloway management team would need to change personnel. On 72 minutes came the change that most of the home support had wanted. On came Seumas Macleod for the tiring Billy Anderson. It was also becoming obvious that it was going to take a moment of inspiration to break the deadlock.

That bit of inspiration arrived on 79 minutes. A free kick awarded was awarded to Carloway on the right wing. Murdo "Squegg" stepped up and seemed to overhit his free kick, or so most of the crowd thought. However Moody miraculously managed to get up to head the ball back across the goal where Domhnall Mackay was in splendid isolation to hammer the ball into the roof of the net. (1-0)

Straight from the kick off came an audacious attempt by Scott Maciver to chip the goalie from the halfway line. Beaton taking no chances by tipping the ball over the bar. A fantastic attempt.

On 87 minutes came the clincher for Carloway. Scott Macaulay breaking into the box was brought down by Stephen Clinton. The referee had no hesitation in pointing to the spot. Fraser Macleod stepped up and although he mishit his shot, it beat Macritchie in the Aths goal. (2-0)

After that there was only time for some substitutions on both sides. Keith Bray coming on for Aths and Kenny "Dokus" and Darren Mackinnon appearing for Carloway

Full Time: Carloway 2 Athletic 0

Carloway will be delighted with this result. Truthfully they struggled for long periods of this game and only stellar defensive performances from the back five prevented them losing. Up front Macleod and Macaulay struggled to make any real impact due to a lack of good service. The midfield worked extremely hard in a defensive manner. However the management team will be extremely satisfied with the result and quite rightly so. Aths will be disappointed to come away with nothing when they had dominated for large spells. However their inability to create any real width meant that few goal scoring opportunities were created.

A footnote to the night is that with this result the 1981 Point team's perfect league record of 18 wins from 18 matches is still intact. No more sleepless nights for Norrie "Tomsh" MacDonald.

Carloway Man of the Match - Calum Tom Moody

Aths Man of the Match - Elliot Ruddall