

Jock Stein Cup Final:

## **Carloway 3 (0) Westside 0 (0)**

*Fraser Macleod 46, 54, 66*

*At Goathill Park, Stornoway.*

*Friday, 5.7.13.*

*Ref.: Calum "Chancey" Macleod.*

*Standside line judge: Robert Mackay.*

*Farside line judge: Murdo Macaulay.*

*Attendance: 896 (unofficial).*

*Iain Mackay*

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

*Kevin "Gochan" Macleod Seumas Macleod Domhnall Mackay(capt.) Murdo "Sqweg" Macleod Dan Crossley  
Scott Macaulay Fraser Macleod*

*Subs.: Kenny "Dokus" Macdonald (Murdo "Sqweg" Macleod) 79; Kevin "Barra" Macneil (Scott Macaulay) 85;*

*Cameron "Tiger" Macarthur (Seumas Macleod) 88.*

*Subs. not used: Darren Mackinnon; Craig Hacker*

*Scott Graham Innes Iain Morrison ☒*

*Dan Macphail Colin George Morrison Kenny "Parry" Macleod Gordon Campbell Ali "Barvas" Macleod*

*Duncan Maclean(capt.) Johnnie Wallace ☒ Cameron Macdonald*

*Gordon Craigie*

*Subs.: D.J.Macleod (Gordon Craigie) 63; Martainn Shields (Johnnie Wallace) 69; Donald "Spike" Smith (Colin George Morrison) 79.*

*Subs. Not used: Timmy Hunter;*

*Yellow cards: Johnnie Wallace 45+2; Innes Iain Morrison 90+2.*

Tonight marked the second collision of the season between the West Lewis rivals, and their fourth-ever Cup Final conflict. The earlier League meeting proved unlucky and unhappy for the Siarachs, where, inspired by a first-half masterclass from Ali "Barvas" Macleod on the right, they shredded the Blues' defence, missing several gilt-edged chances, before succumbing to a killer strike from the deadliest predator of them all, Fraser Macleod, just before the hour. A late penalty by Fraz Mac meant Duncan Maclean's injury-time free-kick couldn't claw a point back for West.

In previous Cup Final meetings, however, the narrative has been less fulfilling for the Blues, initially anyway. Bristling with over-confidence in their 2010 Coop showdown, they began their fifth Final in four years full of aggressive purpose, capturing possession and territory swiftly, but leaving Gordon Kennedy largely untroubled, only for the head of Colin George Morrison to demonstrate succinctly on the half-hour how goals are scored, and for the game to then spin rapidly away from na Gormaich as they huffed and puffed against an impenetrable Siarach defence, inviting them to come and come at them, then breaking explosively through Clinton and Graham. Midway through the second half, "D.J." registered precisely the reason for his presence at Goathill that night; John Campbell added to the Blues' misery later; and Moody's late header merely made the final score look more respectable as the Cuach a' Choop already sped by Royal Mail to Barvas.

Last August at Fivepenny, in front of an attendance any Scottish League Division 2 club would gladly settle for, the weary narrative continued, in all-too-familiar format. Till this point na Gormaich had been perfectly capable of grinding out momentous cup runs since their arrival *en scène* under Peter "Dokus"- remember 2011's monumental HAC campaign, which must have boosted the Black Isle and Ullapool economies astronomically (despite only rating a couple of

sentences in an obscure paragraph inside the back page of the Gazette) - but in Finals the same lions metamorphosed mysteriously into shadows. Lord Lucan slept soundly among the cobwebs in the Carloway trophy room.

West Side, Ladbroke's favourites, had become **the** Cup team *du jour* on the Long Island, in this, their **fifth** consecutive EaF final, with two successes to add to their 2010 Coop Cup triumph. And, once again, the "*galacticos*" fell at the last hurdle, in agonisingly traditional style. Despite a heaven-sent gift in Billy Anderson's cracking opener in five minutes, a lack of pace and invention became more and more obvious as the game progressed. West did not falter throughout from their game-plan, again riding early pressure, to achieve a workman-like edge on the half-hour, before the imagination of Macphail and an inspired forward trio carried them home, after the hour, through the Macivers, "Doug" and Scott.

In September, the earth finally turned for the Blues at Col Uarach, of all places. An enthralling 90 minutes saw the Blues once more open early through "Dokus", be reined back by two perfect penalties from Martainn Shields, then swop tit-for-tat strikes through Andrew "Tago" Maciver and Donald "Spike" Smith, before Calum Tom Moody saved their day with a sublime late header off a glorious Gus Maciver surge and cross. Thereafter the lottery of penalties favoured na Gormaich.

So, to tonight. Apart from David Beaton (on the mainland) and Billy Anderson (unfit), Carloway had a full squad. The talismanic Calum Tom Moody appeared, despite a viral complaint, and Iain Mackay, ex-Harris and Glasgow Island, proved a more-than adequate substitute in goal, his most memorable previous appearances for the Blues being in the 2008 HAC run versus Halkirk and Castletown. Westside's preferred bulwarks at central defence, Ally Williamson and Donnie "Noe" Smith, were both absent injured, so Western Thistle's captain, Cameron Macdonald, partnered Duncan Maclean and Johnnie Wallace at the back; the inspirational Donnie "Spike" Smith was not risked from the start, and Colin George Morrison returned alongside ex-Niseach, Kenny "Parry" Macleod, in central midfield, with playmakers, Dan Macphail and Ali "Barvas" Macleod, wide. Martainn Shields, who could have stretched the Blues' back men even wider, had to be content beside "Spike" on the bench.

Finalists usually treat Cup Finals like away legs in Europe, opening in a cagey, ball-retaining manner, desperate to deny opponents any early advantage, which would give them an early mountain to climb. Not tonight! The traps went up and immediately the huge crowd who, no doubt, had dragged themselves away from the Murray/Janowicz SF at Wimbledon were transported to ancient Rome, to the Colosseum, as both sides grappled for midfield control. An atypical role-reversal soon became apparent, with Carloway willingly surrendering possession and territory, content to break explosively from deep.

In 2 minutes Macaulay broke on the right and released the early ball forward from the centre line to a racing Fraz Mac who stormed forward and from the right side swept a low shot round Craigie but well-wide of the far post. A minute later the duo reprised the move, with the same outcome. Moments later a Maclean free-kick from the right centre line was met by Graham in the left corner of the area but his header went straight to Mackay. In 8 minutes a neat turn inwards by Innes Iain outside the left area saw his drive turned away leftwards by Mackay.

Three minutes later it was Craigie who had to look smart to tip away at full stretch from Macaulay, released left by Macleod. On 18 minutes another Maclean free-kick, just inside the Blues' half on the right, came out to Graham on the edge of the box; he turned beautifully to his right but Mackay had no trouble with his right-footer. Generally, though, creativity was stifled: Crossley and Ali "Barvas" cancelled each other on the left/right, while Macphail and Macleod were submerged in the central dogfight.

On the half-hour, another Maclean free-kick from the same position was exquisitely flighted in but, again, Mackay gripped Graham's effort, this time to his right. Five minutes later Ali "Barvas" finally got free on the right, but his intelligent early deep cross, from midway within the Carloway half on the right, flashed too fast across goal, 8 metres out, for the arriving Graham. In 42 minutes Craigie (unknown to the fans, carrying a hand injury) tried to field "Sqweg's" cross from the right bye-line one-handed; the loose ball was then banged against him by Macaulay/Macleod(?), before being cleared.

On the stroke of half-time Macaulay broke through the centre, then released Macleod early on his left to run in and slip the ball under the covering keeper from 12 metres, but his low strike lacked power and Maclean got back to boot clear.

### **Half-Time: Carloway 0 Westside 0.**

What could the coaches say at the interval to achieve a vital breakthrough? No one had done anything wrong, or played badly; team shapes had been maintained. Not a glimmer of light lay between the sides. Immediately this was to change. Broken play in the left corner of the Siarach's half saw "Gochan" slip the ball back to Mackay, who crossed for Macleod, 16 metres out, to head-flick backwards, where the ball was passing behind Fraz Mac, before he whipped round and instinctively reverse-hooked a right-footer to a surprised Craigie's right (**1-0**).

It was a classic predator's strike. Before West could restore a stability and momentum, it was two. On 54 minutes a Blues' attack was blocked and the ball played back to "Sqweg" coming forward into the Siarach half. He lobbed the ball high, over the advancing defence, where Seumas Macleod was first to react 14 metres out, moving square to his right to bring the ball down expertly, then rotating to fire at goal. The ball was deadened off the covering Maclean's heel, square to the lurking Fraz Mac, and with Craigie already prone, he had the simplest of tasks to side-foot home from 12 metres (**2-0**).

Unexpectedly, Westside were given an instant life-line: a surge was cleared right, for Macdonald to fire back in from the right touch-line, midway within the Carloway half. In the ensuing scrum, Moody knocked the ball away with a raised right arm, claiming he had been impeded by the falling West bodies behind him. "Chancey" ignored him. With Shields not yet on, Colin George stepped up and hit a perfect strike into the keeper's nightmare spot: the bottom left-hand corner. Incredibly, Iain Mackay second-guessed him to pull off a near-miraculous full-body block - and held the ball!

Within the next 10 minutes the Final was decided: on the hour a Maclean corner on the right led to a melée on the Carloway penalty spot, ending with a Wallace blast being blocked straight up and over the bar. Three minutes later D.J. Macleod had to replace Craigie (now revealed to be suffering from a suspected broken finger). Moments later Fraser Macleod turned inwards from the left and from the edge of the box sent a low right-footer to the keeper's right. It thwacked the post and rebounded into the goalie's arms.

However, a minute later, it really was all over. Seumas Macleod won the ball on the right bye-line, and crossed. As D.J. waited to collect 10 metres out, Lewis's leading scorer dashed in front of him. The ball seemed to bounce off his left shoulder behind Macleod, then slowly into an unguarded net (**3-0**).

Carloway now began their usual ploy of running down the clock, at which Macaulay and "Gochan" are irritating experts, as West tried to force it. On 72 minutes another almighty scramble in the Blues' box saw Shields turn to convert but Mackay flung himself forward to block. With 7 minutes left, a header off a Maclean corner on the right was booted off the line by "D.I.", before two final chances came for the Barvas men in added-on time. Ali "Barvas" did well

to turn on the right corner of the box and shoot but Mackay read it running to his right. The keeper did even better on 90+1 as he dived left to tip a beautifully-angled Martainn Shields bender round the post.

### **Full-Time: Carloway 3 West Side 0.**

So, another Cup for Carloway, their first-ever Jock Stein, in what is now becoming an unprecedentedly successful era; four Cups in a row. However, a first Championship remains the ultimate dream, as it does for their opponents tonight. Both would merit the honour on present form, although it has suddenly become that little bit more distant for the Siarachs after Monday night at Coll.

Some *aficionados* suggest that now the Blues' Cup hex has been exorcized, winning Cups, while desired, is no longer the prime aim; the League must now be the focus. Others argue that a team must go for everything while at their peak, as, like in life itself, the seasons swiftly change and a club once invincible - e.g. Ness; Point; Lochs; Back off and on - may soon be unable to go the distance in any competition. Nothing lasts forever. Today's players might be grandfathers before the West Lewis rivals reach this level again.

This score-line masks the tightest of tight opening halves, where each defence kept open chances to a minimum. There had been few clear-cut chances at either end. Unfortunately for the Siarachs, this continued for most of the second half also, as a Gus Maciver-inspired Blues' back-line kept their hands over every lock Westside tried to pick. Dan Macphail and Colin George Morrison were denied Ali "Barvas" Macleod's support on the right, as Dan Crossley and "Ostrich" stood in each other's shadow throughout. This, of course, denied na Gormaich Crossley's improvisational creativity, but as the match progressed, the Carloway mid-line overcame this handicap and Scott Macaulay and Seumas Macleod created more and more space for themselves coming forward, and this, in turn, set up the bullets for the deadliest finisher on the island, the unique Fraser Macleod, to fire.

**West Side Man of the Match: Dan Macphail.**

**Carloway Man of the Match: Gus Maciver.**