

## Coop Cup Round 2:

### Eriskay 3 (2) Carloway 9 (4)

Ali Macdonald 10

Jonathan Campbell 37, 76

Kenny "Dokus" Macdonald 26, 28, 36, 64, 85

Dan Crossley 39, 78

Fraser Macleod 46

Seumas Macleod 72

At Sgoil Lionacleit

Saturday, 20.7.13.

Ref.: Andrew Macisaac.

David Beaton

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

Cameron "Tiger" Macarthur Seumas Macleod Billy Anderson Murdo "Sqweg" Macleod (capt.) Dan Crossley

Kenny "Dokus" Macdonald Fraser Macleod

Subs.: Ben Smith (Calum Tom Moody) 60; Jamie Macdonald (Billy Anderson) 74

Sub. not used: Graeme "Windy" Miller.

Today it was south to Lionacleit for Carloway, as they revelled in the unaccustomed role of Cup holders defending a trophy. The Coop Cup was won for the first time last September at Garrabost, in a dramatic penalty shoot-out with Back. The defence of their Cup had already begun at Cnoc a' Choilich in May, when a Fraser Macleod goal-blitz swiftly pole-axed last year's finalists, 4-0.

A tricky jaunt now followed, in Round 2, to Benbecula, to face an unknown quantity who had surprised the Niseachs at Fivepenny, 1-0, in Round 1. The clubs had one previous meeting, back in May 2004 at Daliburgh, when Nick "Nuck" Davis (2) and Gordon Craigie had secured a 3-3 draw in a Coop Cup Round 1, only for Neil Bowman to miss a vital penalty, and the Blues to crash out 4-5 in the shoot-out. Interestingly, Peter and Kenny "Dokus" Macdonald, Scott Macaulay, and Andrew "Tago" Maciver had also featured that day, in what might have been Iain "Biodach" Mackay's last game in a blue shirt.

Unfortunately, that result forms part of a continuing love/hate relationship na Gormaich shares with clubs from the Southern Isles. At home, results have been mixed: defeats in the HAC 1 to North End, 1-4 in '86, and 0-6 to South End in '93; 1-3 in the HAC 2 to South End in '04; but victories over North End 15-0 in the Coop 1 in '00; and 9-0 versus North Uist Utd in the '11 Coop 1; also, two HAC 1 victories over South End, 2-1 in '06; and 5-0 in '08. However, another nine trips on the road have only brought two victories, both over N.U. Utd. in the HAC 2, 2-1 in '06; and 6-0 in '10. The remainder constitutes a litany of groans: defeats to Wanderers (1-3 in the Coop 1 in '05); Benbecula (1-3, in the Coop 1 in '99; 1-3, in the HAC 1 in '07); two nightmares in Daliburgh versus South End (4-7 in the '08 Coop 1 and 2-3 in the '09 HAC 1); before 1-2 v. Iochdar Saints in the Coop 2, '11; and out on penalties to Saints in the HAC 2 '12, after an electrifying 5-5 draw.

So, not exactly fun and cocktails all round then, as the Blues headed to Sgoil Lionacleit with close to their strongest squad ever, having won four Cups in a row! Were they *en route* to a fifth? Granted, the duty roster had one or two blanks: Kevin "Gochan" Macleod was suspended, Kevin "Barra" Macneill injured, and Domhnall Mackay, Scott Macaulay, and Kevin Anderson unavailable. The solution was to play new star, Cameron "Tiger" MacArthur, at right wing/back with Seumas Macleod inside him. This allowed "Dokus" to push forward to offset Fraser Macleod. Ben Smith and Jamie Macdonald featured on the bench, alongside Assistant Manager Graeme "Windy" Miller.

The setting today resembled a Poussin depiction of "Arcadia": to the West, in the distance, Atlantic rollers broke endlessly; wildflowers covered the school playing fields, and lush gardens

and crofts extended as far as the eye could see; to the north, the mountains of Beinn na Faoghla shimmered in the haze. The heat was crushing. An immediate problem for all sides was the inch-long grass, which deadened the ball and inhibited ground strokes, while bounces were deceptive, causing defenders to send clearances straight up or slice the ball sideways.

After an initial La Liga-style exhibition from the guests, the script suddenly veered sharp left with a nasty surprise in the 10th minute. The Hoops' first corner came in from the left and Ali Macdonald found himself all alone on the 6-metre line in front of goal to volley home, left-footed. The Carloway defence gazed at the spherical object in the base of the net, wondering how it had got there (1-0).

Suddenly a day's outing had become work. The pace quickened: Chievo-style clearing became the rule at the back; a blanket midfield began supplying high balls straight/sometimes wide (for Fraz Mac to outpace Sean Mackinnon *et al*) or low diagonals behind backs, to stretch and release "Dokus" and Crossley; Seumas Macleod constantly steamed forward in support and Crossley tricked his way down the left repeatedly. On 12 minutes a de Boer special sent Fraz Mac through, but Macinnes was out like a flash, forcing him round him to his right; he checked on the bye-line, but his cut-back was scrambled away.

In 23 minutes, a high diagonal from "Sqweg" on the centre-line freed Macleod again, this time down the left, but his drive from 20 metres crashed into the side-net. Three minutes later, however, a quick double put the Blues in front: first, Seumas Macleod forced his way to the left bye-line and his high cut-back cleared the keeper to reach "Dokus", by the far post, and he coolly side-footed home (1-1). Eriskay immediately lost the ball and a high ball forward led to a melée in their box, with Seumas Macleod blocked twice, and then "Dokus" on hand to cut right and send a low cross-shot past Macinnes and into the far corner (1-2).

The pace of the Carloway forward movement was troubling the Hoops' back men continually and it was no surprise when Seumas Macleod once more got to the bye-line, and this time his low, hard cross from the right came to "Dokus" to ram home from 10 metres (1-3). A minute later, against the run of play, Eriskay pulled one back. A succession of corners led to the breaking ball coming to Jonathan Campbell, just outside the box, to smack a low right-foot snapshot into Beaton's bottom right-hand corner (2-3). Two minutes later and the gap widened again, when a break on the right, supplied Fraser Macleod, by the near post, 12 metres out, to thwack a first-timer off the keeper's knees; the ball broke to Crossley in front of goal, and he thumped it instantly into the roof of the net (2-4).

On the stroke of half-time a cross from "Tiger" on the right, 6 metres from the bye-line, was met with a glancing, looping header from Fraz Mac, and Macinnes had to react swiftly to push it over the bar by his right junction of bar and post.

**Half-Time: Eriskay 2 Carloway 4**

At the interval Eriskay's manager could be heard correctly diagnosing their problems: the high balls and low diagonals forward were stretching them; the pace of the Carloway front men menaced continually. However, identifying the problems was easy; solving them was beyond them.

Immediately, the tie spun out of the Hoops' reach, as "Dokus", continuing his Sylvain Wiltord impression, twisted his way diagonally to the left bye-line, and his high cross was met in front of goal by an unmarked Fraser Macleod to head high into the centre of the net from 10 metres. Incredibly, Macinnes got his hand to it but could only push it into the roof of the net (2-5).

On 54 minutes Beaton had to put down his novel to dive low to his right to smother, at the

second attempt, a nasty drive from 20 metres. Moments later it was Macinnes' turn to go one better with a brilliant block, 16 metres from goal, as "Dokus" bore down on him, one-on-one. On the hour, Fraz Mac made the right bye-line, and his sharp cut-back clicked off a defender's heel just enough to deny Seumas Macleod a clean strike from 12 metres by the near post, and the keeper managed to block with his left leg.

However, four minutes later, Crossley travelled down the left, leaving a stream of defenders behind him; he lost the ball in the corner, then won it back; moved up the left bye-line, and crossed. The ball broke square off the heads of an untidy group by Macinnes's left-hand post, 10 metres out, to "Dokus" by the other post, and his casual left-foot flick sent the ball high into the net (2-6).

What the final score-line would be was unimaginable. On 72 minutes an Anderson free-kick on the left centre-line broke down to "Dokus", 12 metres out to the left of goal. He took a single step to his left and shot low; the blocked ball spun right to Seumas Macleod, 10 metres out, and he casually stroked the ball home to Macinnes's left (2-7).

Within minutes, the goal of the match arrived, ironically, at the other end. An Eriskay break on the right ended with a beautiful Martin Peters-type cross from the touch-line, midway within the Carloway half, and Campbell came running in through the line, to meet the ball perfectly, 10 metres out in front of goal, and nod it past a helpless Beaton's right (3-7).

Unfazed, Crossley set off instantly on a run through the entire left-side of the Eriskay eleven, cut into the box, seemed to have lost the ball twice, but continued with his impression of Garrincha back and forth, as defenders seemed incapable of getting the ball off him - then cheekily poked the ball home with his right foot from 6 metres by the keeper's right-hand post (3-8).

On 81 minutes, Macinnes once more showed his class, after a Carloway corner on the left was cleared out to "Sqweg", 24 metres from goal, and his snap drive forced the keeper to push the ball round his right-hand post at full stretch. Four minutes later, however, a long clearance was back-headed on by Seumas Macleod in the centre circle and the irrepressible "Dokus" outpaced the tiring Mackinnon to neatly poke the ball past the advancing goalie, with his right foot from 18 metres (3-9).

**Full-Time: Eriskay 3 Carloway 9**

After a tricky opening quarter-hour, this was a *"plain sailing"* day for na Gormaich. Pace and appetite for the ball seemed to spur the Blues' squad to outshine each other in what was eventually a stroll in the sun, despite the heat and a muscle-tiring surface. A competent display generally was enlightened by a collection of performers - "Dokus", Fraz Mac, Dan C., and Seumas - competing to catch the eye of some hidden scout in the crowd.

Eventually, an early Brazilian-style attitude appeared to prevail: *"So what if they score a goal or two; we **KNOW** we can score more!"* Eriskay were unable to match the pace of the front men, "Dokus", Fraz Mac, and Dan Crossley, increasingly so as the game progressed, and the strikers did not appear to slacken. The unpredictable trickery and dribbling of "Dokus" and Crossley were match-winning by themselves. The forceful drive of Seumas Macleod coming through the centre in support accentuated this forward drive, together with repeated de Boer specials from "Sqweg" and Billy Anderson.

**Eriskay Man of the Match: Duncan Macinnes.**

**Carloway Man of the Match: Kenny "Dokus" Macdonald.**