

## Moldova Lewis Cup Round 2:

# **Carloway 5 (3) Harris 0 (0)**

*Kevin Anderson 21*

*Dan Crossley 22*

*Kevin "Barra" Macneil 34*

*Fraser Macleod 90+1*

*Calum Tom Moody 90+3*

*At Cnoc a' Choilich.*

*Monday, 19.8.13.*

*Ref.: Neil Macritchie.*

*David Beaton*

*Calum Tom Moody Gus Maciver ☒ Donald "D.I." Macleannan*

*David "Cirbhig" Macleod Kevin "Barra" Macneil Billy Anderson Murdo "Sqweg" Macleod (capt.) Dan Crossley*

*Kevin Anderson Fraser Macleod*

*Subs. used: Graeme "Windy" Miller (Kevin Anderson) 45; Colin Maclean (Kevin "Barra" Macneil) 49; James Anderson (David "Cirbhig" Macleod) 75.*

*Yellow card: Gus Maciver 90+3.*

No club competition, or opponent, should be treated lightly, but after the turbo-charged, febrile atmosphere of last Friday's League encounter with Westside at Barvas, the Champions-elect appeared to be approaching tonight's meeting with all the nonchalance of an Exhibition match, no doubt forgetting how the gods rewarded hubris. Astonishingly, this was to be the clubs' **SEVENTH** meeting of the Season, unusual even in Lewis and Harris footballing circles. Apart from both League meetings - won 4-0 (a) and 3-0 (h - by default) by the Blues - by a strange quirk of fate they had been drawn against each other in the opening rounds of the HAC, Jock Stein, EaF, and tonight's Moldova Lewis. They must have been sick of the sight of each other.

In May na Gormaich had won with ease in the second rounds of both HAC (7-1) and Jock Stein (10-0), but a month later the EaF Round 1 had been an altogether more combative affair, "Dokus" scoring a last-minute equalizer to rescue the Blues 3-3 at Rally Park, before Carloway toiled to prevail 2-1 (5-4 on aggregate) in the return three days later at Cnoc a' Choilich. The subsequent SF mauling from Lochs must have made them wonder why they had bothered.

Tonight, an unfamiliar squad faced the Hearachs. Domhnall Mackay, of course, does not return from the Florida Keys till Saturday; Kevin "Gochan" Macleod was serving the second of his three-match suspension; and Kenny "Dokus" Macdonald was returning later tonight from a wedding in Aviemore. The young-bloods - Cameron "Tiger" Macarthur, Ben Smith, and Jack Buchanan - were on Under 18 duty for Western Thistle tomorrow night in a virtual league-decider, while Craig Hacker was unavailable.

However, Billy Anderson had returned from Skye to central midfield, in front of an unchanged back-line and keeper, with Murdo "Sqweg" Macleod and Dan Crossley continuing on his left. Kevin "Barra" Macneil made a long overdue first start to his right, with David "Cirbhig" Macleod making his first full appearance of this Season at right half/wing. Up front, 50-goal star, Fraser Macleod, the island's leading scorer, was supported by explosive hot-rod, Kevin Anderson, on loan till the end of the Season from Bayern Munich. On the bench sat other expensive loanees, Graeme "Windy" Miller (Paris St. Germain) and James "Jackson" Anderson (Inter Milan), on either side of Colin Maclean (Dun Carloway Y.M.C.A.).

It is dangerous to assume that you can stroll to victory against any side. National and International Cups are strewn with famous clubs, embarrassed by sides well below them in the rankings or their Leagues. The fact that Harris had not beaten Carloway since May 2009, 5-0 at Rally Park in the League, nor in a Cup-tie since 2007, on penalties in the Coop Round 1, was

irrelevant; it was still eleven versus eleven on the night - or it was, till Johnnie Porter was invited to have an early shower in the 72nd minute. Indeed, the last time Harris had been victorious at Cnoc a' Choilich was over seven years ago, 3-1 in the League, in May, 2006.

Yet, an over-confident Blues opened in just such a relaxed *totalvoetbal* mode, intent on retaining possession; creating endless Barca-style figures-of-eight, and more, around their own half, then into midfield, forward slightly into the Hearach half, then backwards through the entire movement again - and again - and again. Harris, in turn, conscious of the trademark Carloway breaks, engineered by Anderson, "Swegg", Moody, and Crossley, diagonally to wings between stopper and back or over the line, and the pacy breaks of the last, would not be tempted, leaving only one man up, and immediately flooding their box and just outside it, at the slightest whiff of danger.

There were few, initially: in the 2nd minute, a low cross from the left reached David Macleod, 20 metres out on the right of the box but his powerful left-foot curler whizzed a metre over. Six minutes later the ball broke to Fraser Macleod just inside the left of the box, but a surprised "Gress" read his shot to his right. On 14 minutes an Anderson free-kick on the right, 22 metres out, was driven into the wall; a *melée* ensued, with the loose ball eventually coming to Crossley, on the right of the penalty spot. He spun round rightwards to shoot but went down under a clumsy challenge. All eyes looked to the referee; "*Nothing doing*", was the reply. Crossley's immediate response was to set off on a mazy run the length of the left of the park, trailing opponents like streamers, on into the box to shoot from 16 metres, but Macleod managed to parry it, and the rebound was cleared on to Dalmore Beach.

Suddenly the Blues took the lead from an unexpected source: in 21 minutes Fraz Mac was sent free into the left of the Harris half. Midway in, he checked, 5 metres from the touch-line, and he delivered the most exquisite high right-foot curler into the centre of the Hearach box for Anderson to ghost between the markers and nod past the left of the helpless "Gress" from 8 metres (**1-0**). An absolute peach!

Immediately it was surpassed, as Harris lost the ball from the restart and, just inside his own half, Moody sent an early de Boer special high diagonally left for Crossley, breaking off the end of the line, to bring down one-touch with his left, carry forward and invite "Gress" to commit, then side-foot it home with his right, just inside the box, from 16 metres (**2-0**). Wow! Gianni Rivera couldn't have done it better.

After 28 minutes a "Sqwegg" free-kick, just inside the right of the Hearach box, by the touch-line, was head-flicked on by a running "Barra", 10 metres from goal, but the busy "Gress" pulled off a brilliant stop with his outstretched right-hand, flat out on his line, for a corner. A succession of corners led to Moody meeting an Anderson corner from the left, 8 metres out by the far post, but his header slipped just outside the post.

Three minutes later, another elusive Crossley dribble took him to the left bye-line, to cut in and stroke along the 6 metre line, where "Barra" connected, "Gress" blocked, then blocked a second time before "Barra" forced it home at his third attempt (**3-0**).

Na Gormaich now reverted to their La Liga imitation, encouraging Andy Morrison to come forward and chase and Jamie Fraser *et al* to encroach, but without real interest. Apart from a speculative Crossley blast from 30 metres, well-wide, and a heart-stopping moment when Chris Campbell's clearing header off a "Barra" cross from the right almost gave Carloway a fourth, just slipping past his near post, no one missed anything by joining the half-time Bovril queue early.

**Half-Time: Carloway 3 Harris 0**

In the 80s, no one retired in Scottish football; they simply signed for Alex Macdonald's Hearts. In the 21st century, Carloway seemed to have taken on the Jam Tarts' mantle. Off went goal "hero", Anderson (to a round of applause, mainly from himself); Moody moved alongside Fraz Mac, no doubt hopeful someone might actually start passing the ball to him for a change now his partner had departed; and Graeme "Windy" Miller took the right-back berth.

Within two minutes, Colin Maclean had to replace the injured "Barra". On 51 minutes, Fraser Macleod, along with Crossley, one of the few who appeared interested in fulfilling their job descriptions, broke at pace down the right but his low, hard cross 8 metres from the bye-line saw "Cirbhig" blocked at the near post by Campbell. A minute later, yet another mesmerizing Crossley run, this time on the right, ended with a sizzler from 12 metres crashing into the top of the near-side netting.

With Maciver now practically in midfield, then later, in the forward-line, Harris, in their turn, decided that the Blues' laid-back performance might be ripe for exploitation. Heavy defence was abandoned and Scott Morrison pushed forward, but this meant the pace of Fraz Mac and Crossley was freed to create multiple chances. On 56 minutes a free-kick on the centre edge of the box was sent into orbit by Maciver. Two minutes later Crossley made the left bye-line but his low cross was toe-poked past the near post by an unmarked Fraz Mac. A moment later, a through ball from Billy Anderson sent Fraz Mac racing into the left of the box but his cracker was brilliantly blocked by "Gress", low to his right.

Finally, Harris themselves went clear down the Blues' left but Morrison's low drive from 20 metres was parried by Beaton, to his right, then the loose ball booted into the neighbouring croft. On 67 minutes clever play by No. 10 (?) to the right of the box released Porter to drive from the right edge of the box but his shot flew well-wide of the near post. A minute later "Sqwegg" won the ball in the centre circle and his early forward pass found Macleod in the box to the left. He checked, but his reverse right-footer went straight at his namesake.

The mysterious departure of Johnny Porter increased Harris's woes, just before a cross from "Cirbhig" by the touch-line, 10 metres from the bye-line, came low and square across the box to Moody, alone by the far post, but "Gress" pulled off the **Save of the Season** with a miraculous stop with his outstretched left hand as he fell backwards.

As the last 10 minutes began, Carloway's main aim now appeared to be providing their talismanic stopper, Gus Maciver, with his first-ever Senior goal; but it soon became transparently clear why he is just that - a stopper. In 81 minutes Fraz Mac broke deep on the left, then cut the ball back to Maciver on the near edge of the box. He drifted left, then thwacked the ball wide of the far post. Four minutes later Moody sent "Sqwegg" forward on the right, and his slip to his left found Fraz Mac, moving in to travel past two men, then practically break the top of "Gress's" right-hand post in two with a ferocious strike.

Maciver now had another mazy run, moving in from the left, but was blocked 16 metres from goal, before, moving into added-on time, a Crossley surge down the left transferred the ball forward to Fraser Macleod to cut inwards into the left corner of the box and send a glorious right-foot finish low into the keeper's bottom right-hand corner (**4-0**).

Two minutes later Maciver moved forward into the Hearach half, then sent a delightful golden defence-splitter rightish to Fraz Mac, to square early to the unmarked Moody, 18 metres out in the centre, and he stepped forward to slot wide of the rushing "Gress" and into his bottom left-hand corner (**5-0**).

However, Gus Maciver's night was only to end with much gnashing of teeth, as, in the final

seconds, once again, his shot from 16 metres was blocked, then Neil Macritchie turned the knife in the wound by asking him for his autograph right at the death for obstructing an opponent.

**Full-Time: Carloway 5 Harris 0**

From Carloway's point of view, it's difficult to assess this game: at times it looked like an end-of-season bounce game; at others, like an outing for Leverburgh Care Home. A significant few, also, seemed more concerned with boosting personal goal tallies, or simply scoring. Harris, however, were unable to profit from this, and, to a certain extent, they were slightly unlucky. Chris Campbell, "Daz", Scott Morrison, and Angus Nicolson were coping reasonably safely when massed defence was the preferred option, but the opening goal stemmed from an exquisitely inviting Fraz Mac cross that even Gus Maciver might have converted; the second from an example of breathtaking personal control and execution from Dan Crossley that Robin van Persie would struggle to emulate. A candidate for **Goal of the Season!**

After that, the contest descended into party mode, with rigorous structures abandoned by both sides, though, arguably, the Blues were never playing according to an agreed formation throughout. Despite this, there were still creditable performances from on-message squad members: "D.I." and Gus Maciver (in his recognized role) at the back; Billy Anderson, "Sgwegg", and Dan Crossley in midfield; and "Cirbhig", "Barra", and Fraser Macleod up front.

**Carloway Man of the Match: Dan Crossley**

**Harris Man of the Match: Andy "Gress" Macleod (What a keeper! Some of this guy's saves defied physics)**