

Eilean an Fhraoich Cup Final :

## **Carloway 1 (1) Westside 2 (1)**

Stuart "Bubble" Macdonald 34 Ali Williamson 19

Innes Iain Morrison 46

At Col Uarach.

Friday, 8.8.14, 7 p.m.

Referee: Stuart Macleod.

Stand-side Line Judge: David Nicolson

Far-side Line Judge: Neil Macritchie

Fourth Official: David "Spider" Macleod

MANAGER: Graeme "Windy" Miller.

Jack MacIennan (United)

Cameron "Tiger" Macarthur Domhnall Mackay (capt.) Donald "D.I." MacIennan  
Kevin "Barra" Macneil Kenny "Dokus" Macdonald Murdo "Squegg" Macleod Stuart  
"Bubble" Macdonald (Athletic) Gordon "Tago" Macdonald  
Scott Macaulay Jack Buchanan

Subs.: Ross Maciver (Gordon "Tago" Macdonald) 60; Billy Anderson (Murdo "Squegg"  
Macleod) 70; Gordon MacIennan (United)(Kevin "Barra" Macneil) 72.

Subs. not used: Gordon Craigie; Chris "Christy" Smith.

MANAGER: Murdo "Murchadh" Macdonald

Innes Iain Macdonald Ali "Barvas" Macleod

Dan Macphail Ali Williamson Angie Campbell (Lochs) Scott Graham Gordon Campbell  
Duncan Maclean (capt.) Johnny Wallace (Ness) Donnie "Noe" Smith  
Peter Macaskill

Subs.: Kenny "Parry" Macleod (Ali Williamson) 79; Murdo "Mojo" Maclean (Athletic)(Dan  
Macphail) 85; Chris Adams (Ali "Barvas" Macleod) 90+2.

Subs. not used: Shaun "Lefty" Macdonald; Andy "Barvas" Macleod.

Yellow cards: Ali "Barvas" Macleod 90+1

There are no weeks off for the battle-weary during a Lewis and Harris football season. After the crushing disappointment of last Saturday's encounter at the Tulloch Caledonian Stadium, the last thing Carloway might have wished for was a Monday League game at Col Uarach, followed by a further visit to the same ground tonight to face their bitterest rivals, Westside, in the EaF final. The additional prospect of three games next week - two of them against a resurgent Lochs - didn't exactly fill the squad with glee, either.

Tonight, what should have been viewed as a chance to right old wrongs, to register a first victory in an elusive Cup, was suddenly an unwelcome chore. Rest - a night off - seemed preferable to the opportunity to display this Cup for the first time on the Doune Braes gantry. The regular Siarach outfit are largely local or have local connections, with Cameron Macdonald and Martainn Shields the only obvious absentees; but the addition of Johnnie Wallace (Ness), Angie Campbell (Lochs), and perennial old boys, Murdo "Mojo" Maclean and Chris Adams, more than compensated. No doubt, Scott Maciver would have been present, also, if fit.

There must be a factory producing footballers somewhere in the Barvas area as this evening's confrontation featured Westside's seventh consecutive appearance in an EaF Final. Na Gormaich's EaF history is distinctly less illustrious, registering only five Final appearances, each disappointing in different ways. Three consecutive finals were contested between 1955 and 1957, and more recently 2-4 to Harris at Goathill in 1999 and 1-2 to tonight's opponents, two years ago, at Fivepenny. That night, before a 600+ crowd, a Billy Anderson cracker had inspired early hope that the name "*Carloway*" might, at last, be engraved on this elusive silverware, but Mark "Doug" Maciver and Scott Maciver soon shot that dream down in flames.

In all, seven Blues who featured that night performed again tonight: Domhnall Mackay, Donald "D.I." MacIennan, Stuart Macdonald, and Kenny "Dokus" Macdonald from the start, with Gordon Craigie, Billy Anderson, and Gordon MacIennan on the bench. However, many more Siarachs reprised their roles: Johnny Wallace had been ruled out in 2012 with an injured ankle, so Donnie "Noe" Smith, Ally "Norman Hunter" Williamson, and Duncan Maclean had been the last line of defence in front of Peter Macaskill, with Ali "Barvas" Macleod, Gordon Campbell, and Dan Macphail, in the centre. Scott Graham had led, but Innes Iain Morrison had been in the bull-pen with Andy "Barvas" Macleod and Chris Adams. Colin George Morrison had been up a mountain in Africa, at the time; maybe he's still there.

The Carloway squad's backgrounds are rather more diverse, hence, greater ineligibility. The season is over for a few, anyway - David Beaton (ruptured Achilles tendon); Iain Angus "Gus" Maciver (concussion); and Dan Crossley (knee condition) - but Scott Macaulay was still available, before heading south, and the redoubtable Stuart "Bubble" Macdonald (Athletic) and MacIennan brothers, Jack and Gordon (United), stepped up to the plate once more. Kevin "Barra" Macneil and Gordon "Tago" Macdonald started on either flank.

The attendance didn't rival that of two years past, understandable in view of

the unattractive overhead aspect, which brought occasional flurries of light rain, but, fortunately, little wind. Nevertheless, the greasy conditions militated against easy close control, the ball shooting off, rather than bouncing cleanly, and sudden changes of direction led to repeated falls. An early Blues' break sent Buchanan into the left of the West box, but he was crowded out to the left and his sudden turn and square cross was mishit by Macaulay, 12 metres out, and hooked clear.

A minute later the Siarachs had a golden chance to open: Williamson, just inside the Carloway half, lifting the ball over his head to Morrison to flick right to the breaking Ali "Barvas", free on the right behind "Tiger", to take off at pace into the Carloway box. On the line he squared left to Morrison but the striker, uncharacteristically, swept the ball low and well-wide of Maclellan's right-hand post. On 16 minutes "Squegg" flighted the ball 20 metres to his right to "Barra", midway within the Siarach half. He immediately played the ball inwards to Macaulay, who cut left along the edge of the box, to flick on to Buchanan. The young star could not turn and returned the ball, but Macaulay's instant low left-footer went several metres wide of Macaskill's right.

Immediately, sustained Siarach pressure led to an early opener, Macphail winning the ball in the Carloway half, then sending Ali "Barvas" racing into the right of the Blues' box. Twelve metres from the line he crossed but it was just too high for the arriving Morrison, who pursued it to the opposite touch-line, held off Mackay, then played back to his captain, who moved it in to Campbell, to find Graham, take the return, then break in to the box to force a corner. The ball was headed clear and played left to Maclean to find "Barvas" with oceans of space in front of him, who checked and sent a careful high ball to dip by the far post where an unmarked Williamson did not even have to jump to nod home from 6 metres **(0-1)**

On 23 minutes a Maclean free-kick, 22 metres out in the centre, came back off the wall but Graham's reflex drive from 26 metres whizzed a metre over the bar. Three minutes later it was Carloway's turn to test their free-kick skills but "Tago's" left-foot effort curled round the wall and just outside Macaskill's right-hand post. A Campbell free-kick from 26 metres on the right followed, breaking to Graham, 10 metres out by the far post, but his attempt went straight up.

Unexpectedly, na Gormaich drew level in the 34th minute. Macaulay trickery saw him win a corner on Macaskill's right and when "Dokus's" perfect corner curled in, "Bubble" beat a mass of black and gold, 12 metres out in front of goal, to nod down and just inside the keeper's left-hand post **(1-1)**

Three minutes a final real chance of the half arrived, when a “D.I.” thump on Morrison’s right ankle, 20 metres from goal, led to a Maclean free-kick once more hitting the wall; a second attempt from Graham did likewise, and the ball was booted clear.

### **Half-Time: Carloway 1 Westside 1**

What is the cure for tired limbs? Not Bovril or slices of orange anyway. On the evidence of the first half, there was plenty for “Windy” to think about. How do you stem the supply from Macphail and Campbell to Macleod and Morrison? How do you support Macaulay more, in his attempts to link up with Buchanan? Whether suggested solutions were appropriate or not was rendered immediately irrelevant as the initial attack of the second half delivered a second goal for West. Angie Campbell was clear immediately through the centre and from midway within the Carloway half sent the perfect diagonal right of the line for an unmarked Williamson(?) to cut back across the face of goal from the bye-line, just out of Maclellan’s reach, for Morrison to ghost in on his right and convert (1-2).

The blow galvanised Blues’ attempts to respond. Activity increased, but not creativity. It was 66 minutes before the door was briefly unlocked and then it resulted from a scintillating run by “Bubble”, off a high “D.I.” clearance from the right of his own half. A leap saw him out-head “Noe”, then touch the ball past Wallace to make the bye-line, to cut square. Buchanan came to meet it at the near post but as Macaskill dived at his feet, his right-foot flick didn’t really connect and the ball continued on to Maciver by the far post. However, his right-foot drive crashed into the side-netting. A minute later a Carloway corner on Macaskill’s right led to a long Ali “Bravas” clearance downfield which gave Morrison the chance to break at pace, moving in off “Tiger” towards the box. Challenged by Mackay, his attempted slip to Williamson was cut out and cleared.

On 71 minutes a Maclean free-kick, 16 metres from the bye-line, outside the box on Maclellan’s right, was head-flicked on neatly by Ali “Barvas”. It broke off Anderson and Mackay, and reached Macphail by the far post but his left-foot swipe at the ball was dragged into the side-netting.

The war of attrition continued; there were more substitutions than sights of goal. In 84 minutes a Maclellan throw-out to his left found Maciver just inside the Carloway half. The young-blade squared it to “Dokus” whose careful scooped lob straight forward sent “Bubble” scampering towards the left of the Siarach box. Twenty metres out he squared to the arriving “Dokus”, but his studied right-foot attempt went well beyond Macaskill’s left-hand junction of bar and post.

Right on the whistle a high Anderson free-kick from just inside the Siarach box was grabbed by Macaskill as it dropped towards him, 8 metres from goal; he collided with a defender, the ball fell; "Bubble" got a foot to it; "D.I." tried to back-heel it, but Gordon Campbell eventually managed to run it clear to the right.

### **Full-Time: Carloway 1 Westside 2**

For years, Domhnall "Twechar" opined that West Lewis derbies didn't require a ball, as it was an unnecessary addition to encounters, seemingly staged to settle old scores, establish new pecking orders, and remove competitors (physically) for the remainder of that season. The A. & E. Department at Ospadal nan Eilean always had extra beds clear on these Derby nights, with ambulances on stand-by.

The general complaint about tonight's meeting was that it lacked the passion and commitment of yesteryears. It was "*the poorest and tamest CARLOWAY FC V WEST SIDE FC fixture..... witnessed in many a year*". Apart from a few Carloway regulars returning late favours - and late boots - to Ali "Trevor Hockey" Williamson - as recompense, perhaps, for past slights - how the Blues love that guy! - the only contentious tackle was Ali "Barvas's" on "Bubble" right at the death. Innes Iain Morrison might disagree as "D.I." certainly didn't stand back and admire him.

"Barvas's" Jim Brogan-special, though it can't be condoned, was understandable when his team was seconds away from victory. Michael Ballack would certainly have done the same if it wasted a few more seconds - only he wouldn't have missed!

Na Gormaich seemed a pale, tired shadow of the side which played out such an exhilarating first hour versus Avoch last Saturday and tonight at times looked like a bunch of workmen on an unexpected call-out, rather than a side within grasp of a long-awaited triumph. Saturday's epic struggle in Inverness had clearly drained them, and not just physically. The hectic Lewis and Harris timetable breeds exhaustion, with injury exacerbated by squad requirements. The fear for their faithful must be that the remainder of their Season will be a tired and unrewarded plod to the final whistle. Overall, it was hardly a night to remember, despite "Pluto's" attempts to stir up excitement and expectations in his pre-match "entertainment".

Strangely, for a game of this nature, Jack Maclennan and Peter Macaskill had less to do than you might think as blanket midfielders went head-to-head. At times it was difficult to reckon who were second support strikers to the two

loneliest young men in Col Uarach, Innes Iain Morrison and Jack Buchanan, as both sides frequently indulged 3-6-1 formations and Smith/Wallace/Maclean and "Tiger"/Mackay/"D.I" could occasionally have passed the time in practising their Dashing White Sergeant routines for the next Ceilidh dance.

**Carloway Man of the Match: Stuart "Bubble" Macdonald.**

**Westside Man of the Match: Angie Campbell.**