

Jock Stein Cup Round 1:

## **Carloway 0 (0) Westside 3 (1)**

*Duncan Maclean 15  
Luke Mackay 53, 55*

*At Cnoc a'Choilich, 19.00.*

*Monday, 1.5.17.*

*Ref.: Stuart Macleod.*

*Carloway line judge: Calum "Cobby" Macleod.*

*Westside line judge: Iain Gillies.*

**CARLOWAY: 4-4-2.**

*Manager: Graeme "Windy" Miller.*

*Asst. Managers: Domhnall Mackay; "Gus" Maciver.*

*Gordon "Van Der Sar" Craigie*

*Andrew "Tago" Maciver   Ali "Laxay" Macdonald   Donald "D.I." MacIennan ■   Joe  
Armstrong*

*Jordan Macleod ■   Domhnall Mackay (capt.) ■   Archie "Statto" MacDonald   Kenny  
"Dokus" Macdonald*

*Callum "Beag" Mackay   Kevin "Gochan" Macleod*

*Subs. used: Billy Anderson (Callum "Beag" Mackay) ■   62; Cameron "Tiger" Macarthur  
(Jordan Macleod) 74; Sven Wiltshire (Kevin "Gochan" Macleod) 90+1.*

*Subs. not used: Ben Smith; Stuart "Gochan" Macleod.*

*Yellow cards: Donald "D.I." MacIennan 15; Jordan Macleod 68; Domhnall Mackay 83; Billy  
Anderson 90+1.*

**WESTSIDE: 4-5-1.**

*Manager: "Murchadh" Macdonald.*

*Asst. Manager: Alex Matheson.*

*Luke Mackay*

*Martainn Shields   Innes Iain Morrison   Ally Williamson ■   Scott Graham   Lewis  
"Preston" Robinson*

*Duncan Maclean (capt.)   Euan Shirkie   Donnie "Noe" Smith   Gordon Campbell  
David "Lurch" Murray*

*Subs. used: Alex John Morrison (Martainn Shields) 74; Johnnie Wallace (Ally Williamson) 80.*

*Subs. not used: Shaun "Lefty" Macdonald; Ewan Macleod.*

*Yellow card: Ally Williamson 62.*

In the film, "*Groundhog Day*", Bill Murray is condemned to replay the same day each day forever, although, by his actions on a particular day, he can improve his circumstances in the following days. It's not that unlike island football, where the small number of clubs and large number of cups throws a club up against the same opposition over and over again, usually the side that a particular team would least like to see again, for a number of reasons. Hence tonight Carloway's predicament: no doubt the players - well, those of them who bore the white heat of the Siarach front-men - would probably have preferred to face Real Madrid tonight - Ronaldo, Benzema, *et al* - than their nemesis from just up the coast who had so profoundly filleted them on Friday night. However, face them they must, which meant that the management and squad had to honestly examine their shortcomings from the League match and, if possible, find ways of coping and/or improving.

Apart from Ali "Barvas" Macleod, side-lined with a nasty knee injury acquired 17 minutes into the game at Barvas, both squads looked remarkably similar to those of that match, and, assuming that West would not really see the need to alter their approach, "Windy's" not-so-easy task tonight was to arrange those available most effectively, talk up morale (which must have been lower than ankle-level), and talk tactics. No pressure then!!!!

There was no shortage of threats to combat, judging from the ABC and League games: the pace of Mackay, Robinson, and Shields (and "Barvas"); the ingenuity of Morrison, and the aggressive forcing of Williamson, Graham, Campbell, plus the dead-ball expertise of their captain, Maclean.

Tonight David Beaton and Murdo "Squegg" Macleod were unavailable, so Gordon "Van Der Sar" Craigie deputized at the back, of course. Cameron "Tiger" Macarthur had endured a torrid time on the right versus Martainn Shields, so a different approach saw Andrew "Tago" Maciver withdrawn to right wing-back to pressure the dangerous speed-merchant and cross-ball expert, to sit on him and minimize the chances of the ball reaching his feet, facing Craigie, with space to run - which proved fatal on Friday.

This weakened the midfield, so the ever-tenacious Archie "Statto" MacDonald was moved rightwards to assist Domhnall Mackay in blocking Scott Graham and Ally Williamson, while Kenny "Dokus" Macdonald switched to the left to present Gordon Campbell with a problem and take some of the weight off Joe Armstrong behind him, facing Lewis "Preston" Robinson.

Pacy young-blood, Jordan Macleod, re-entered the fray at right midfield/wingman to stretch and test the Siarach back-line and the influential Kevin "Gochan" Macleod now supported the often-isolated Callum "Beag" Mackay in the centre up front in the hope that some form of effective strike force might finally be created. Ali "Laxay" Macdonald and Donald "D.I." MacLennan were assigned the onerous tasks of picking up Luke Mackay and Innes Iain Morrison as and when, although Mackay was on the latter's case much of the time also.

Unlike the ABC tie here last month, when Carloway were under pressure from the kick-off, both sides hit the ground running and the opening minutes were reminiscent of a mediaeval jousting contest as midfields fought for an early edge, at times literally. The Blues had learned from their two previous maulings that lying deep, both in defence and in midfield, allowing the main battle-line to play out 10 metres within their half, was inadvisable and pushed forward aggressively.

In 6 minutes "Statto" received the ball in the centre, then broke forward, leftish, into the West half, before supplying "Dokus" wide on the left. He checked, 20 metres from the line, and then sent across a high swinging right-footer which "Lurch" was forced to touch onwards for a corner, under pressure. Six minutes later, na Gormaich almost took an astonishing lead. "Lurch" came out towards the edge of his box to boot the ball clear, down the centre of the park. The ball travelled through to Mackay, just inside his own

half in the centre circle, and he instantly Garry Owen-ed the ball back in the direction of the keeper. "Lurch", retreating slowly to his goal, suddenly realised what might happen, dashed back, then stopped 10 metres out to collect the descending ball. However, the ball took an almighty bounce up into the air just in front of him then flew up over his head and bounced straight up off the top of the bar, came down, bounced once more off the top of the bar, then came down into a very grateful keeper's arms! Phew! What a goal that would have been!

Moments later, a disputed free-kick against "D.I.", for a foul on Morrison on the left edge of the Carloway box, led to the sweetest of left-foot strikes from the Siarach captain Duncan Maclean over the wall and high to Craigie's left (0-1).

In 18 minutes Williamson tried to exploit a shaken Carloway with a 30-metre drive in the centre but his powerful strike shot a foot wide of the left bar. A minute later a Mackay free-kick from the centre circle, just inside the West half, led to a melée within the Siarach box, as Maclean attempted to boot clear. Mackay was then blocked by Smith and Maclean, the ball rebounding to Macleod, who supplied "Dokus" to his left. "Dokus" moved towards the far bye-line, then twisted and turned left of Campbell before flying over an in-swinging ball but unfortunately it was overhit and went a metre over the bar.

The Blues' high octane pressing was certainly containing Morrison and Shields, something they had failed spectacularly to do at Barvas, and this in turn minimized the ammunition reaching Mackay. Around the half-hour two further Dokus free-kicks, both on the Carloway right, just inside the Siarach half, proved fruitless, the first a high curling left-footer falling short and past "Lurch's" left-hand post, the second hit long but just a metre too fast for "Statto" to connect by the far post.

In 38 minutes "D.I." won the ball in his own half and steamed forward on the right to send a nicely-flighted ball forward for Macleod to scamper down the wing behind Maclean. Sixteen metres from the bye-line, just outside the box, he spotted the keeper coming out towards him and cut the ball square past him, but the loose ball whizzing across the face of the goal found no takers and Shirkie booted it clear by the far post.

**Half-time: Carloway 0 Westside 1**

Comparatively speaking, the half had been a moderate success in the art of containment but, despite seeing the whites of "Lurch's" eyes much more frequently than they had in their two previous confrontations, "Noe", Shirkie, and "Lurch" had rarely been scrambling. Macleod's pace and "Dokus's" trickery had also introduced occasional disquiet into the Siarach ranks but "Gochan" and "Beag" had rarely been able to capitalize. To come on stronger, of course, led to the increased risk that the lurking dangers at the other end, relatively controlled in those opening 45 minutes, might be that bit freer to roam.

However, any suggestion of complacency or belief that this half would be

more of the same was soon quashed as West re-appeared, clearly intending to up the tempo and establish clear daylight between the sides. Immediately, it almost became a whole lot worse for na Gormaich, with Mackay liberating Campbell down the right outside Armstrong. Twelve metres from the bye-line, he whipped across a high nasty cross which Craigie rushed out to seize by the far post. He seemed to have it, 8 metres out, but "Tago" rushing back to cover and jumping in front of him, disconcerted the keeper and the ball slipped downwards from his grasp as he fell and rolled outwards. Morrison fired the ball back in at the unguarded goal, "Laxay" blocked it, then Mackay, on the edge of the box, crashed a left-footer a foot over the right-side of the bar.

Six minutes later an enormous clearance downfield by Williamson sent "Laxay" and Mackay off in a desperate race towards the right side of the Carloway box for possession. The young star reached it first to send an immediate right-foot strike looping towards Craigie's goal but it zipped just outside his left-hand post. A minute later Morrison gathered the ball in the centre, midway within the Carloway half. Mackay and "Statto" immediately arrived to cover, but the elusive *trequantista* twisted away from them, then stepped back to send a beautiful chip into the right of the Blues' box. Robinson pounced on it but "Van Der Sar" did well to block his attempt with his right foot. The ball ricocheted high, back into the centre, where Mackay, on the edge of the box, let it drop before whacking it back towards Craigie, but was blocked by "D.I." As the rebound came back to him, he took his time to slot a careful right-foot daisy-cutter deep into the Carloway right-foot corner. A coolly executed strike! **(0-2)**.

Seconds later, the tie was effectively settled. From the kick-off na Gormaich were rebuffed and the ball cleared down the West left. Just inside the Carloway half, Maclean and "Tago" tussled and the ball broke inwards and forward. Mackay collected it in the centre, midway within the Blues' half, but was challenged by "Laxay". He turned his marker beautifully as he moved leftwards and forward, then from 23 metres unleashed a screaming right-footer high into Craigie's left-hand corner. An unstoppable cracker! **(0-3)**.

Understandably, the pace now dropped as Carloway attempted a consolation goal, with West happy to let them come at them, then hit the break. In 73 minutes a mighty Mackay free-kick, 10 metres within the Siarach half, on their left touch-line, was met on the volley by MacDonald, 12 metres from goal at the back post, but the ball flew square across goal without getting a touch. A minute later Mackay almost made it a deserved hat-trick broken play on the left ended allowed Maclean to send across a superb head-high diagonal which the young striker just failed to get enough weight, just inside the centre of the box, and his header went skiting off like lightning past the Blues' left-hand post.

Anderson then set up "Tago" down na Gormaich's left with the perfect ball over Campbell. Sixteen metres from goal, on the touch-line, he checked back, then cut in, but "Lurch" read his drive and beat it away at the near post. Unfortunately, "Tago" completely miscued his attempt on the rebound and the

ball was last seen heading along the Pentland Road.

As the clock ran down, “Windy” rolled the dice a few more times: Macleod was taken off; “Dokus” moved to the right; “Tiger” appeared at right wing-back and “Tago” came forward into midfield; and “Statto” moved left, but the effect was negligible. Indeed, in 80 minutes, it was almost four, as Robinson chased a breaking ball into Carloway’s right corner. He played the ball back to Morrison who sent an inviting ball across the face of the goal. Craigie could only palm it onwards, and A.J. Morrison chased it, then sent it back to the surging Campbell who drove diagonally into the corner of the box. From 16 metres he fired the ball high over Craigie, but the goalie managed to get a palm to it, and touched it on to the bar, and away.

The final action saw Anderson free “Dokus” on the right to make the bye-line but his low cross was slightly deflected and “Tago”, arriving in the centre, could only pull the ball round in an awkward right-foot hook which looped harmlessly into “Lurch’s” hands.

**Full-time: Carloway 0 (0) Westside 3 (1)**

For the home side, this was undeniably an improved performance on those in their previous two contests, more in terms of commitment and containment, despite the final result, which, perhaps, slightly flattered the opposition. Na Gormaich did not crumble when they went behind, nor when Mackay’s stunning third crashed home. To their credit, the attitude of the squad and the management was, *“Forget it! Let’s get back to work!”*

However, win the Barvas men did, and win they deserved. They managed to achieve three times what Carloway seem to have a sudden conspicuous problem doing - scoring. Once again, the number of clear-cut chances created by the Siarachs outnumbered that of na Gormaich. Indeed, in each of these three confrontations, West has looked likely to score each time they have entered the final quarter of the pitch.

Carloway have developed a recent problem of being unable to get into that area, never mind convert chances. Many options have been stationed in the central strike area: “Frazmac”; Callum “Beag”; “Statto”; “Dokus”, but invariably the designated squad member has felt like Napoleon on Elba and largely abandoned the role, in order to go off in search of the ball. Generally, the Blues’ midfield has had their hands so full dealing with their opposing numbers to supply those before and wide of them on a regular basis.

Nevertheless, the Blues’ midfield were more successful tonight at stifling the assertive forcefulness of West’s Graham and Williamson and supplying wide, and “Tago” had an outstanding game, generally nullifying the threat on the left. However, a side with West’s range of quality - the pace of the three front runners; the creative elusiveness of Morrison (though quieter tonight); the explosive surges of “Preston”; and the slippery deadliness of Mackay, are bound to create multiple openings against any island side, however well the likes of players like “Laxay” and “D.I.’ compete.

**Carloway Man of the Match: Andrew “Tago” Maciver.**

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