

Eilean an Fhraoich Cup Round 1 Leg 2:

Carloway 1 (1) Westside 4 (0) (Aggregate: 3-4)

Kenny "Dokus" Macdonald 29 (pen.) Ali "Barvas" Macleod 73
Luke Mackay 75
Innes Iain Morrison 76
Alex John Morrison 90+1

Cnoc a' Choilich, Carloway.
Monday, 11th June, 2018, 19.00.

Referee: Andrew Macaulay.
Carloway line judge: Angus "Dee" Macarthur.
Westside line judge: Paul Forster

CARLOWAY: 4-5-1.

Manager: Graeme "Windy" Miller.
Asst. Managers: Domhnall Mackay; Iain Angus "Gus" Maciver.

Jack Maclennan (United)

Callum "Beag" Mackay Coinneach Smith (United) Cameron "Tiger" Macarthur Calum "Killer"
Mackay ■

Kenny "Dokus" Macdonald Domhnall Mackay (capt.) John "Uig" Morrison (Lochs) Andy "Bernera"
Morrison Gordon "Tago" Macdonald (Lochs) ■
Hamish Macdonald (United)

Subs. used: Joe Armstrong (Calum "Killer" Mackay) 83; Billy Anderson (Andy "Bernera" Morrison)
90+1

Subs. not used: Andrew "Lanky" Macdonald; Euan Gilmour.

Yellow cards: Gordon "Tago" Macdonald (foul play) 41; Calum "Killer" Mackay (foul play) 82.

WESTSIDE: 4-4-2.

Manager: "Murchadh" Macdonald.
Asst. Manager: Stuart "Tyson" Campbell.

Luke Mackay Innes Iain Morrison ■

Ali Macrae ■ Scott Graham (capt.) Colin Macrae ■ Ali "Barvas" Macleod
Duncan Maclean Donnie "Noe" Smith Ali Williamson Martainn Shields
Iain Gillies

Subs. Used: Alex John Morrison (Ali Macrae); Sam Mackay (Martainn Shields) 90+2

Subs. not used: Gordon Campbell.

Yellow cards: Innes Iain Morrison 63; Ali Macrae 68; Colin Macrae 69.

The hosts - or, at least, roughly half of them - entered tonight's confrontation in a curious situation. No doubt, the two excruciating second-half performances at Ness and Coll haunted the minds of the Carloway regulars involved. Yet they might have managed to expunge the memory of those two debilitating experiences by dwelling on the two substantial victories they had ground out against their visitors tonight, 2-0 at Barvas in the First Leg of this tie, then 3-1 in the League at Cnoc a' Choilich three days later. Hopefully, they could overlook these two unfortunate recent occurrences - or, even better, learn from them - and rekindle the hard, uncompromising, 90-minute graft which prevailed at Barvas. What could be learned from the two second-halves at Ness and Back is difficult to assess. Work ethic did not dissipate as those games progressed, but self-belief appeared to, after Russell-Smith's penalty at Fivepenny and "Gordie's" first strike at Col Uarach, and eventually a failure to re-group and re-

apply a shape and cohesion to a side losing control caused catastrophe.

Tonight, of course, such concerns could not be addressed, given the exigencies of the Cup concerned. First, the good news: all six guests from the First Leg returned: the United trio, Jack Maclellan, Coinneach Smith, and Hamish Macdonald, and the Lochs duo, John "Uig" Morrison and Gordon "Tago" Macdonald, although this time, Smith was required to move to centre-back, alongside Domhnall Mackay. Cameron "Tiger" Macarthur was suspended, Donald "D.I." Maclellan was still out with a hand injury. Eachainn Miller had picked up an injury at Coll, so Andy "Bernera" Morrison started on left midfield, between "Uig" and "Tago", with Kenny "Dokus" Macdonald moving to the right to fill in for the ineligible Calum Masson, while Calum "Killer" Mackay made a first start at left-back as Joe Armstrong was still travelling back to the island following a family wedding.

For the Siarachs, the gifted Ali "Barvas" Macleod started on the right, and Duncan Maclean had returned from holiday to left-back, but right-sided dynamo, Gordon Campbell, was only risked on the bench.

The usual enormous crowd turned out to grace the latest West Coast derby, on a fair, windless evening, although the temperature declined rapidly - off the park, that is - as the sun declined. Carloway almost had a dream start, as Callum "Beag" won a Gillies kick-out just inside the right of his own half and immediately supplied "Dokus" towards the right touch-line. He turned and out-paced Maclean to about 18 metres from the bye-line, before sending across a high right-foot cross-cum-shot which deceived Gillies by carrying over him, striking the face of the bar, and bouncing off to the left.

Two minutes later West almost went one better when a Shields throw-in on the left centre-line was headed on by "Barvas", to allow Mackay to move in clear on the right behind "Killer", midway within the Blues' half. He carried the ball into the right of the Carloway box, before slipping the ball past the advancing Maclellan towards goal, but Smith had managed to get back behind the keeper to sweep the ball away for a corner to the Blues' left. Two minutes another chance materialized for the visitors when "Noe" won the ball in the centre, then steamed forward into the Blues' half. He slipped the ball forward to "Barvas", whose chip allowed Mackay once again to move in on the right, but Maclellan was out like a flash to block his attempt, 16 metres from goal.

It was 26 minutes before either side threatened again and this time a Maclean free-kick from midway within the Carloway left was hoisted expertly to the far post. The Carloway back-line did not move as Williamson, "Barvas", and Graham came in at the far post, but Graham, usually so deadly in such situations, put his volley into the side-netting from 12 metres.

Three minutes later the home side widened the gap, when Gillies failed to hold a speculative "Killer" shot. The left-back won the ball on the left centre-line before bursting forward and trying his luck from 24 metres. Gillies had the right-footer covered easily by his left-hand post, but didn't hold, but beat it to the side. "Dokus" was in fast to seize the ball and move outwards from the keeper who appeared to impede him from behind. "Dokus" himself converted the penalty, just inside West's

right-hand post, as the keeper went left (**1-0**).

It was 39 minutes before the Siarachs almost reduced the deficit. Ali Macrae gained the ball on the left centre-line before playing it in square to his brother Colin Macrae, who supplied Graham, and he, in turn, swept it wide to "Barvas" on the right. Macleod whizzed past Mackay before whipping across a nasty low right-footer, 12 metres from the bye-line, which Maclelland was happy to block away outwards. The ball ran straight to Shirkie in the centre, 22 metres from goal, but his snap low right-footer flashed across Maclelland and just outside his right-hand post. A moment later "Barvas" once again received the ball on the right touch-line, 22 metres from the bye-line, but his deep cross across the goal was just a foot too far for Mackay to connect.

The final chance of the first half arrived two minutes later when "Tago" robbed Shields midway within the West half, on the left, then ran in on goal but his fierce drive from the edge of the box was beaten away by Gillies to his right.

Half-time: Carloway 1 Westside 0

A hard-fought affair had seen West's greater urgency - understandable, given their situation - give them the edge in possession and chances, and they no doubt felt unlucky to be behind on the night. Carloway were still dogged by their recent inability to create multiple clear-cut chances, regardless of their changing line-up, and had once again needed a smile from Lady Fortune to go ahead.

The pattern did not change. In 53 minutes yet another Maclean free-kick, this time from the left touch-line, 24 metres from the bye-line, forced Maclelland to beat the ball away under pressure, 12 metres out, in front of goal. On the hour a Shields free-kick from the right centre-line was met perfectly by Graham, just inside the left of the Carloway box, but his powerful header went straight to Maclelland.

Four minutes later Gillies had to move smartly to grab the ball, 12 metres from goal, as a Domhnall Mackay free-kick from the centre-line ping-ponged dangerously around in front of him. In 69 minutes a Maclean free-kick from the left centre-line was headed outwards by Mackay, around the penalty spot, and Macrae won the ball in a tussle with "Bubble", 24 metres from goal, but his instant right-footer flew high and wide of Maclelland's left-hand junction of bar and post.

However, West suddenly pulled one back in the 73rd minute, owing to a bit of Ali "Barvas" magic: a long ball from Williamson, midway within his own half, on the left, was won by Mackay, 10 metres inside the Carloway half, on the Blues' left touch-line. He checked back, away from Mackay, and slipped the ball into "Barvas" moving forward towards the right edge of the Carloway box. The wing-man did not hesitate but sent the neatest of gentle right-foot lobs high to Maclelland's right and just inside the top of his right-hand post (**1-1**). A beauty!

A stunned na Gormaich had little time to recalibrate before a rampant West struck again. A long West goal-kick down the centre was just too high for "Uig", just inside his own half, and the ball glanced onwards off his head, to Mackay, 22 metres from goal, facing outwards. He controlled the ball and turned right in one movement before firing off an immediate low right-footer which rocketed past the right of a

surprised Maclennan (1-2).

But Carloway's agony was by no means over. Immediately, the home side was under pressure again, as Williamson, in the left of his own half, found "Barvas" moving towards the corner flag on the right. Under pressure from "Killer", he whipped across a low cross which was booted out by Mackay, returned, then booted out by "Killer", before it found its way to Shields on the right, midway within the Carloway half. His cross was cleared out by Callum "Beag" only as far as Innes Iain, 22 metres from goal in the centre, and he flashed a screaming right-footer low inside Maclennan's right-hand post (1-3).

Three goals in three minutes from West set up a frantic end-to-end final 14 minutes, in which both sides came close to clinching that important winner. Two minutes later Carloway had a chance to re-take the initiative when neat interplay on the right touch-line between Callum "Beag" and "Uig", just inside the right side of the West half, allowed "Uig" to supply "Dokus" ahead of him. He immediately went off on a run into the right of the box, one-two'd with "Bernera" and from 16 metres tried to stab the ball goalwards. Williamson blocked the ball square across goal and it ran to "Tago", in the centre, but his immediate high flick goal-wards was touched over the central bar brilliantly by Gillies.

However, in added-on time, just as extra-time seemed inevitable, West administered the *coup de grâce* with another spectacular goal: an attack on their right was cleared out to the left touch-line, where it was gathered by Alex John Morrison, midway within the half. He immediately turned inwards off Callum "Beag" and as he reached the near corner of the box, swept across a high right-foot lob, a cross-cum-shot, which travelled high over Maclennan, then dipped sharply inside the far post. Whether he meant it or not, it was a cracker! (1-4).

Full-time: Carloway 1 (1) Westside 4 (0) (Aggregate: 3-4).

So, *quo vadis*, Carloway? Where do the Blues go from here? How do they come back from this? Squad morale must have been through the dressing-room floor after this. In 18 minutes they had completely lost their hold on the EaF, although the warning signs had been there throughout. West had approached this game in much the same form as they had in the first half-hour in Barvas, although with a tighter defence, despite Campbell's absence. They had created more, and better, chances throughout but had been wasteful. The law of averages suggested that they were bound to hit the jackpot eventually. Maybe not three times, perhaps, though that three-minute period tells another story.

When Luke Mackay turned the ball in and in front of Ali "Barvas", the wing-man looked up, saw Maclennan's position, then took one touch to send the ball exactly where he wanted it. When Mackay made room for himself leftwards off his marker, he did not hesitate but whipped round and had a go. Likewise, when the ball was cleared out to Innes Iain, like "Barvas" he looked up, then sent the ball straightaway where he wanted it. Tight organization and certainty of position allows this.

Such sudden improvisation seemed beyond Carloway, a willingness to have a go, or take a chance - fast. With twenty minutes to go, the Blues seemed to be drifting, holding till the final whistle. Cautious in approach, eager to hold and build, the fast

break, over the top or wide, was only used occasionally by the Blues. Hamish Macdonald spent the game underused, chasing the ball or opponent, rather than charging towards goal, while Callum "Beag's" pace and skill seemed wasted so far back. Against an aggressive opponent, the midfield operated as single units, their roles uncertain, as was the man-marking. "Killer" was obviously on Ali "Barvas", Callum "Beag" on Ali Macrae. Who was watching Luke Mackay? Domhnall or "Tiger"? And Innes Iain? Coinneach Smith? Andy "Bernera" also seemed uncertain of where to lie, and "Tago" lay so deep, he was really a half-back. Was this to mind Martainn Shields?

Yet, na Gormaich came so close to making it, but this would have been a triumph of will and commitment in a war of attrition, rather than through outwitting or out-playing the opposition.

Carlway Man of the Match: Calum "Killer" Mackay.

Westside Man of the Match: Ali Williamson.