

## Kevin Anderson steps down as manager

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Everyone's life involves choices, usually regarding family, friends, and career. If you are fortunate, there is no conflict. Unfortunately, for most people, conflict is unavoidable and must be faced. A passion, like playing in or running a football team, cannot always be indulged. Carloway was clearly a passion of Kevin's but as is common at certain stages of our lives, a huge part of his life exists outside the bootroom and Cnoc a'Choilich and must be attended to and enjoyed in full. So all of us at Carloway, without doubt, regret Kevin's decision to step down as manager but understand and accept it.

Before the arrival of Peter "Dokus" Macdonald and Kevin Anderson in 2010, silverware in the Carloway boardroom had been as rare as expectant pandas. Inheriting a side that had ended the previous season third from the foot of the table and had just been beaten 0-4 by Lochs in the Jock Stein Cup Final, a revolution gradually unfolded, as the duo operated on the principle, "*It's not what's right or wrong; it's what works*". Gradually, from the withered tree, a flower began to bloom. New tactics and style, restructuring existing personnel but also elevating the young and attracting the new, inspired the Blues to become a force on the island, recording successive 3<sup>rd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> League finishes in the next three seasons, and three Cup Final appearances, losing in the Jock Stein again, to Lochs 0-7 in 2009; 2-5 after extra-time to Back in the Moldova Lewis the same year; then 1-3 to Westside the following season.

"Dokus's" sudden departure over the winter of 2010-11 led to Kevin's elevation to the hot seat, with former star, Graeme "Windy" Miller taking on Kevin's former rôle. Slowly, and at times painfully, an era of unbridled success began to unfold: five finals were achieved, bringing the Club its first major silverware in over half a century, and the first League title in na Gormaich's eighty-year history. In 2011 Carloway seemed destined for stunning League glory but stumbled on the home straight and had to settle for a first-ever League runners-up spot, yet still embarked on a glorious Highland Amateur Cup run, eventually losing 1-3 in a stirring cup semi-final in Ullapool to Avoch, eventual winners of the trophy. 2012, however, saw the arrival of Gus Maciver from Athletic, though an extensive, continuing injury list saw the Blues slip back to a final fifth position in the League, but the added strength at the back led to appearances in three cup finals. Although the Eilean an Fhraoich brought the now expected misery as Westside rallied to defeat Carloway 1-2, the season concluded with two heart-stopping penalty shoot-out victories, 7-6 over Back in the Coop Cup (after a 1-1 draw) at Garrabost and 4-3 over Westside (after an extra-time 3-3 draw) in the Moldova Lewis at Col Uarach. Hence Domhnall MacKay became the first Carloway captain since 1957 to lift a major trophy.

The days of champagne, Magner, and glory carried onwards relentlessly into 2013, in no small way enhanced by the recovery of *terquartista*, Scott Macaulay, and the signing of the final piece in the team jigsaw, goal-machine Fraser Macleod, from Back. In May, a first-ever Acres Boys Club Cup was secured, after demolishing Back 6-0 in their first victory within 90 minutes and at Goathill. Next, na Gormaich achieved another first, a Jock Stein Cup, after overcoming Westside 3-0 in the final, in what was their fourth consecutive Cup victory. For a time it looked

as if Carloway were going to keep winning and winning but no team wins every game and, inevitably, the winning wave abated, but they still were to keep their nerve in the League and in mid-August an unbeaten League run led to Barvas and a deciding showdown with old enemies, the Siarachs. A pulsating 3-1 victory before a large crowd witnessed Carloway storm to glory, while also completing a first-ever unbeaten season in the League. Astonishingly, four cups and a League Championship had been secured in the space of twelve months.

And why not? Kevin and "Windy" had assembled the finest squad that has ever graced the blue of Carloway F.C. and had also painstakingly instilled a win-win mentality within the club, equally as important as any level of skill or talent shared by team members. The temptation, of course, is to carry on, continually adapting, changing, bringing in the new, etc., as Shankly's Liverpool did, or Revie's Leeds United. Others would argue you should not tempt the fates in this way and leave the scene on a high, like Guardiola or Ferguson. Perhaps wisely, Kevin has chosen the latter and this means his name enters the history books unblemished, a shining example of what might turn out to be na Gormaich's golden age.