

Match Report 15th August – NW Whiskies vs Wests at Raroa

Courtesy of Reuters AG

It was an overcast afternoon when 11 handsome, fit and good looking men gallantly strode out on the football pitch to demonstrate their flair and finesse.

It was then that I realised that I had turned up at the wrong game on a different football pitch, and quickly made my way to Raroa...



As today was my 39th Birthday, I travelled to the game morosely pondering over the passing years and how age has slowly crept up on me. However when I glanced onto the field and saw that for many of the team, age had slammed into them like a Tokyo Bullet train, I felt much better.

The team warm up was focused and intense – this was one match that everyone wanted to win. Ludo practiced his French form of Tai Chi (otherwise known in other countries as Karate) in case he had to fight for the honour of the team yet again. Russell warmed up his elbow by moving his cigarette to and from his mouth, and 87 knee braces were applied by the rest of the team.

Team manager, organiser, player, chief cook and bottlewasher Phil Sale announced the starting line up.

Game time approached....Somewhere in the distance a dog howled...Tumbleweed rolled lazily across the plain and trigger fingers were itchy to settle the score. It was beginning to feel like a scene out of the movie 'High Noon'.

However, as it was actually 2.30pm the similarity ended there.

With many a limb swathed in Ace Bandages and the air heavy with the smell of Deep Heat and Glenfiddich our time wearied warriors strode onto the pitch to face Wests.

Wests, whose uniforms looked like they'd been recently squeezed from tube of toothpaste strode onto the pitch like a load of big noisy bald headed englishmen.

This was probably due to the fact that most of the team is made up of big noisy bald headed englishmen....

Having had serious 'attitude' issues arise when both teams played each other earlier in the season, it was decided that it would be prudent to have an official referee oversee the proceedings. So it was with an air of authority that the bloke in yellow blew his whistle to start the match.



The game started tentatively, with both sides trying to get a read on the game and finding their feet against their opposition. The physicality between the two sides showed itself early on with lots of pushing happening from both sides, with the sideline supporters all commenting on the fact that an official referee was definitely a good idea. Just as this comment was being made, Westie jumped up for a header and decided instead to nuzzle the shoulder blade of the opposition with his nose. After a stagger to the sidelines, the claret flowed and waterboy Phil Sale ran over with his bottle of water, and Staff Nurse Paul Waters rushed over to don his nurses uniform and administer first aid.



25 mins into the game and it was obvious that Wests were getting frustrated with each other as the in- team fighting seem to rear its head. A hand ball from Paul resulted in a free kick for Wests that ricocheted off Phils manly and was eventually cleared.



Ten mins later Paul made up for the hand ball with a long range free kick that nearly resulted in a goal.

The warm temperature sapped the energy of our internationals as South Africa was substituted on the pitch for France.

Before you could say 'Zulu would beat Chafie in a short distance running race' it was half time.

During the half time break Phil reiterated the need to keep subbing on and off to keep everyone fresh, and that the team were playing well but needed to do it all over again for another 45 mins.



Bruce then began his team talk, but unfortunately by this time, everyone had headed back onto the park.

The second half began. Ludo began to show Wests that he could fit into the smallest of gaps and weave through their players. The amount of high balls and headers in the game increased to a crescendo, with the bumpy pitch meaning that any balls left to bounce could end up in any direction.

Suddenly, during a Dr Chris corner Westie waltzed with the goalie and it looked like a goal had been scored! However the guy in yellow said that some interference had occurred and disallowed the goal.

Dr Chris was undeterred tho and had several more attempts to put one in the back of the net from a volley of long range shots. Unfortunately the goal we needed stayed away.



With only minutes left, Wests took a corner. The sound on the pitch went so quiet you could hear brittle bones snapping over at the Retirement Village.



Luckily Goalie Kris worked his magic and kept the ball out.

Final whistle and the scoreline stood at 0-0. Whilst not the win we wanted, I felt the team played a brilliant game – some great passing and goal shot attempts. The whole team rose to the challenge of playing Wests and as a result it was a tight evenly matched game. It seemed that Wests were extremely happy to come away with a draw, such was the intense style of the match. For the second year running we heard the victorious cry of Wests as they cemented their top spot after playing against us. Make the most of it Wests – coz we'll be back with vengeance next year!!

Afterwards back at the clubrooms interviews with both players and supporters were held. After one of the interviews where he was constantly interrupted by hecklers, Phil Sale was quoted saying 'Chafie found his true position today and played his best game of the season. From the sideline'.

Joanne Sale
CNN Sports

Aftermatch interview videos to come....