



# Lions knocked off top by classy Barons

Lee Valley Lions 2,  
Solihull Barons 17

THE Lee Valley Lions' reign at the top of the ice hockey first division came to an end on Sunday when mighty Solihull displayed their quality in front of a packed Lee Valley crowd.

The Barons gained another convincing win with a superlative performance to dampen the spirits of the Lee Valley optimists who hoped their team could pull off a shock win.

But in the end it was not to be, and Solihull took over at the top — it is difficult to see who can possibly catch them.

Said Lions manager Mike Smith: "I'm disappointed, but not unhappy with our performance because I feel we did well against such good opposition. I think Solihull could be a major force in the premier and I don't think anyone will beat them in the first division."

The Barons got off to an unbelievable start when Canadian Mark Budz scored after eight seconds — who said he had a knee injury!

From then on Solihull treated everyone to a fine display of skilful and aggressive hockey which was notable for several splendid goals.

In particular, player coach Chuck Taylor and the other import Dean Vogelgesang stood out with some blistering shots and fast moves. The Barons also screened Lions goalie Vesa Pennanen throughout the match, which was an effective tactic.

Said Smith: "Taylor and Vogelgesang are both excellent players and very sporting with it — I think they could both hold their own in a high level of hockey in Canada."

Solihull were six up at the end of the first period, but Lee Valley pulled one back early in the second — and in a match of fine goals, the Lions' opening strike was probably the best.

Will Fish skated the length of the ice, went round the back of the net and slipped it past England goalie David Graham for a fine score. The goal was very similar to the one Fish



CONFUSION in the Lee Valley goalmouth against Solihull on Sunday. Vesa Pennanen smotheres the puck as a few players clash. Rod Turner is the Baron giving Fred Sandford a dirty look! (Photo: Tony Furby, x109)

scored at Crowtree and the Minnesota defender was easily the Lions' best player on Sunday.

The game followed the same pattern throughout the rest of the match, but hopefully the Lions will learn from this tough experience.

Bill Watson scored their other goal to keep up his record of scoring in every league game so far — but in truth, Solihull won at a canter.

There was disappoint-

players are a bit down, they did well."

The Lions now have a month's break from league action and their next competitive game is on January 20 — at Solihull!

Before that the Lions will be at home to Swedish touring team AC Kamel on Wednesday January 2 (face-off 5.30pm).

Lee Valley will field some mystery guest players for the friendly against the Swedes, who are staging a brief British tour.

## Ice Hockey with Paul Newman

ment for Lions captain Geoff Williams who was playing against his old side and was keyed up for the occasion.

But he had a fairly good game, as did most of the Lions — perhaps the biggest difference between the sides was depth.

Solihull had four top quality lines whereas Lee Valley were reliant on two for most of the match — but the Barons are the nearest thing to a professional side in this country — and it showed.

Added Smith: "Now we've played against them I feel we can get a bit closer next time and although our

The Lions will also play Finnish team Normanic — goal-minder Vesa Pennanen's old side — on a date to be arranged.

● The Lions v Solihull match received a pre-match boost when BBC's London Plus programme previewed the game on Friday. They talked to Geoff Williams and a few fans, the spectators in the spotlight were: Bill "it's unique" Ward, Glen "it's great" Strongitharm, Bob "give us an 'L'" Seaman, Dave "unfortunately, yes" Staplehurst, Beverly "really fast and exciting" Mitchell, Kim Wilson, Stephen Bray and me!

### Match facts

	1	2	3	T
Lee Valley Lions.....	0	1	1	2
Solihull Barons.....	6	5	6	17

**First period:** Lee Valley, no goals. Solihull, Butz (unassisted), Vogelgesang (ass Skidmore and Taylor), Turner R. (ass Butz and Greasley), Welch (ass Taylor), Taylor (ass O'Higgins and Frankum), Taylor (ass Smith and Budz).

**Penalties:** Lee Valley, Delderfield (interference). Solihull, Smith (elbows).

**Second period:** Lee Valley, Fish (unassisted). Solihull, Vogelgesang (unassisted), Vogelgesang (ass Budz and Taylor), Vogelgesang (ass Skidmore), Welch (ass Taylor), Smith (unassisted).

**Penalties:** Lee Valley, Bergin (elbows), Sandford F. (hooking), Fish (cross checking), Sandford F. (hooking). Solihull, Turner R. (roughing), Budz (slashing), Patterson (ungentlemanly conduct).

**Third period:** Lee Valley, Watson (unassisted). Solihull, Taylor (ass O'Higgins), Vogelgesang (ass Budz), Taylor (unassisted), Budz (ass Taylor and Turner P.), Budz (unassisted), Taylor (ass Turner R. and Greasley).

**Penalties:** Lee Valley, Murray (interference), Delderfield (interference), Sandford F. (ungentlemanly conduct). Solihull, Patterson (interference), Turner P. (ungentlemanly conduct), Patterson (holding).

**Shots on goal:** Lee Valley 20, Solihull 57.