

No end of year cheer for Lions

THE Lee Valley Lions ended 2006 in disappointing fashion with back-to-back defeats against Romford Spitfires and the Streatham Redskins.

Lee Valley had thrashed their Romford rivals 7-1 at home in October but the Spitfires, who were enjoying an upturn in fortunes, kept that run going with an 8-5 home victory against the Lions last Saturday.

Andrzej Maslak had given the visitors an early lead, before goals from Ricky Mills and former Lion Ben Osborne put Romford ahead in the second period.

Lee Valley levelled through a spectacular slapshot from Scott Beeson, before Jon Gray regained the hosts lead at 3-2.

Lions' defenceman Romanas Fedotovas had some slinky moves up his sleeve and unleashed the best of them to equalise on the powerplay at 38:50.

It was another powerplay effort from Fedotovas that saw Lee Valley creep into a 4-3 lead at 40:25.

The Spitfires first levelled through Sean Martin before retaking the lead via Osborne's second of the

night. The advantage was extended further by an unassisted Evander Grinnell effort, although Ben Williams hit the back of the Romford net in great style for the Lions to make it 6-5.

But any chances of a fight back were denied when first Osborne completed his hat-trick, before Martin converted an eighth goal for the Spitfires.

It was a similar story at the weekend as the Lions, despite a brave effort, crashed to a 6-4 home defeat at the hands of Streatham.

Injuries, holidays and a match ban for Paul O'Neill, left the hosts to face formidable opponents with only 11 players and one netminder.

Scott Beeson put Lee Valley ahead at just 02:57, before Michael Jacobs, assisted by Stas Profokiev and Romanas Fedotovas made it 2-0.

Perry Richardson pulled one back for the Redskins and matters were then made worse for the hosts, when netminder Stefan Nubert aggravated an existing injury and was forced to carry on in pain. Five minutes into the

second period Richardson levelled the scores, before Robert Blazowski put the south Londoners in front for the first time. A long-ranging shot from Fedotovas was tipped into the top of the net by Williams to level the scores.

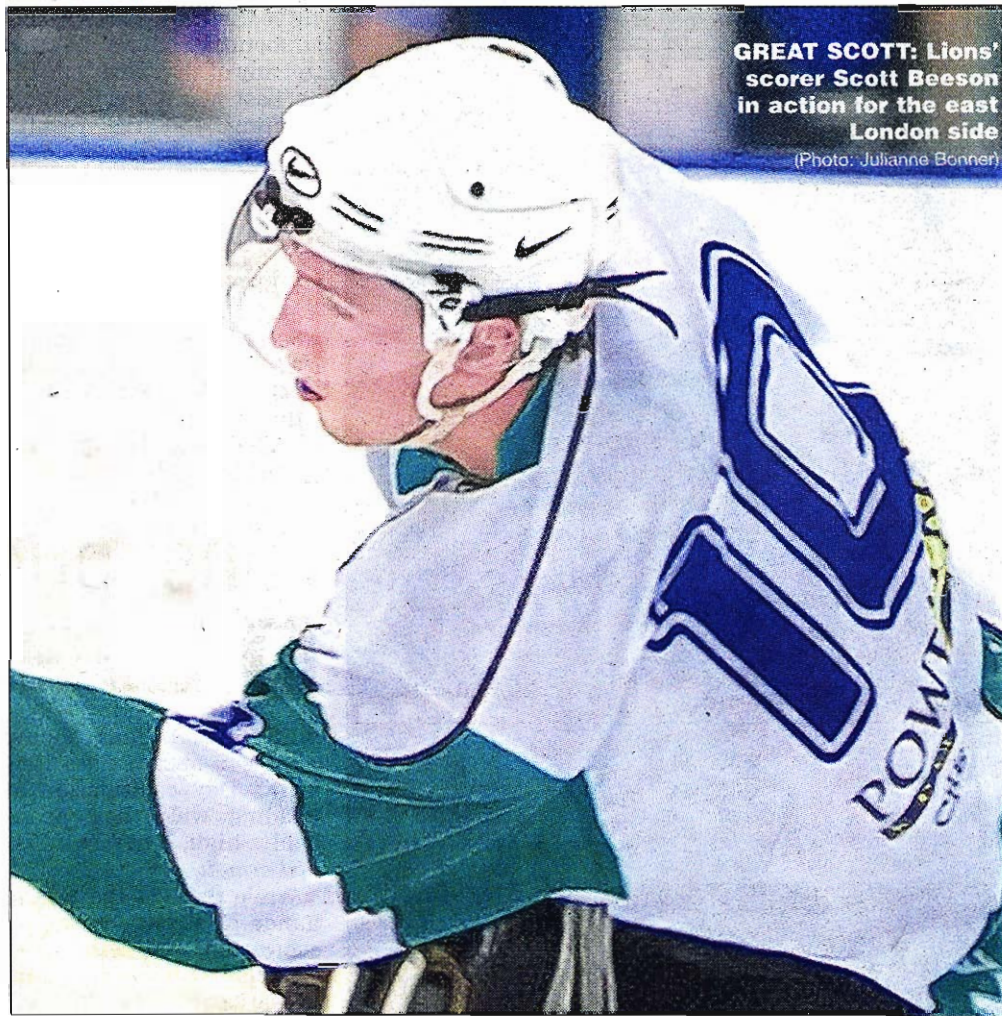
In the final period Richardson completed his hat-trick before Blazowski made it 5-3 with Streatham's first even-handed goal of the match.

Lee Valley hit back to narrow the gap at 50:42, their fourth goal scored by new signing Stas Profokiev. Sadly less than a minute later the visitors sealed their win with a hat-trick goal from Blazowski.

The Lions may not have beaten their South London rivals, but the standard of play from start to finish was superb and the large crowd watching were thoroughly entertained.

Scorer of their first goal, Beeson said: "We can still be very proud of this result, because we went out with a very good attitude and everyone on the ice gave it everything, even playing through injuries.

"This is the team we are capable of being."



GREAT SCOTT: Lions' scorer Scott Beeson in action for the east London side

(Photo: Julianne Bonner)

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