Crazy late spell enables Lions to take full revenge

Scott Beeson (left) and Ben Williams celebrate a Lions' goal

LIONS suffered a crushing defeat to the Solent & Gosport Sharks only the weekend before, so the Lee Valley side were determined the same embarrassment wouldn't occur on home ice.

The Lions had the advantage of a full bench, while the Sharks could muster a squad of only nine players.

Gosport had the previous week's victory fresh in their minds and for the first few minutes the Lions had difficulty in breaking through the visitors' defence.

Sharks always seemed to be perfectly positioned to ward off attack, but the breakthrough came at 12:43 when Scott Beeson scored, assisted by Andy Watt and Ben Williams.

It was Beeson who struck again on 16:02, assisted by Williams and Paul O'Neill.

Less than a minute later Stas Profokiev impressively hit the back of

Lee Valley Lions 12, Gosport Sharks 4

the net unassisted to put the Lions 3-0 up at the end of the first period.

At the same point in the previous week's away leg the Lions had been 3-0 down.

The second period began with Paul O'Neill hit with a 2+10 penalty for checking from behind. The call was hotly disputed but the protests were dismissed by referee Russell-Samways.

The controversial penalty did nothing to hamper the Lions' enthusiasm as Profokiev went on to score both short-handed and unassisted at 24:19.

Being short-handed soon took its toll and Gosport's Martin Thorpe scored the first of his hat-trick of goals at 25:14.

Lee Valley were now starting to suffer from the string of penalties.

At 30:55 Lions' Romanas Fedotovas clashed with the Sharks' Kris Abbott. As both clambered to their feet Fedotovas used his elbow on Abbott before kicking him.

Mr Russell-Samways had no choice but to issue Fedotovas with a match penalty. With Andrzej Maslak already serving a ban, this left the Lions without a foreign player for the second week running.

The gravity of the incident means Fedotovas could be banned for almost all the Lions' remaining games.

Gosport wasted no time in taking advantage, powerplay goals getting the better of netminder George Alley at 31:46 and 32:30.

The Lions' fragile lead was now under threat and their confidence took a hammering when Gosport equalised at 39:42 to bring the score to 4-4.

Lions stepped up a gear and tipped matters back in their favour with the goal of the match from defenceman Mark Swaine.

Sharks' Jeffery had been solid in goal and continued to see off shots from the Lee Valley contingent but his luck changed at 53:00 when an excellent shot from Ben Williams hit home, assists going to Michael Ranby and Andy Watt.

A crazy few minutes followed as almost every shot aimed at the Gosport net went in, allowing the Lions to score six goals in under two minutes.

These goals included a slapshot scored from the left at an almost impossibly wide angle by Beeson and another where the referee overruled the goal judge.

It was Beeson who rounded off the scoring at 56:24 with his fifth goal, the assist going to Ben Williams.

Man of the Match was awarded to 18-year-old netminder George Alley.

Those whose stats were particularly impressive were Scott Beeson (5+0), Ben Williams (2+4), Andy Watt (0+5), Stas Profokiev (3+0) and Michael Ranby (0+3).