

Lee Valley Lions 7

Bristol Pitbulls 5

LEE VALLEY returned to winning ways with a 7-5 victory over Bristol Pitbulls.

Lions kicked off their encounter against Bristol Pitbulls in grand style on Saturday, goals from imports Philippe Mueller and Blair Dubyk putting the Lions 2-0 ahead within just over a minute. Bristol soon got over the shock and Janne Virtanen passed to Paul Davis from the face-off and the puck travelled straight past netminder Ruth Cattell, the powerplay goal coming at six minutes, 40 seconds.

After their initial burst of energy, the Lions played lethargically through the first period and their lack of energy resulted in the visitors equalising at 13.23.

Bristol pushed ahead in the opening minutes of the second period, scoring their second powerplay goal after Kwabina Oppong-Addai was served with two minutes for interference. James Hatfull put in a lot of hard work for the Lions and he was finally awarded with an assist when his pass to Blair Dubyk resulted in Lee Valley's third goal at 29.25.

The Pitbulls nudged ahead once more as a goalmouth scramble ended in Jamie Chilcott finding a path past an incapacitated Cattell, but Calum Heath brought the Lions level-pegging with a goal assisted by James Scott-Joseph at 39.43.

Heath was also responsible for opening the scoring in the final period, pushing Lee Valley ahead by the narrowest of margins.

Soon after the Lions lost Calum Mathieson when an accidental stick to the face of an opponent drew blood, forcing the refs to serve him with an obligatory match ban.

Five minutes short-handed was going to be tough for the Lions to ride out and Pitbulls' Adrian Smith soon levelled the score at 5-5.

Finally, with 10 minutes left on the clock, it was the Lions' turn to capitalise on a powerplay, Blair Dubyk scoring his hat-trick with assists from Kwabina Oppong-Addai and Calum Heath. Bristol called a time-out during the final two minutes and decided on the risky option of pulling their netminder in favour of an extra skater.

The tactic didn't work in their favour as a triumphant Blair Dubyk scored once again, his empty-net goal securing the Lions' 7-5 victory at 58.51.