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07.01.07 Cardiff Dragons 14-6 Lee Valley Lions

The Lions had already endured a long and bumpy ride to Wales and were not helped by a women's match causing the late face-off time to be severely delayed. This match was the first for the Dragons in their new Cardiff Bay rink, having played relatively few games so far this season. They knew they had some catching-up to do and wasted no time in showing the Lions they meant business.

David James was first on the score sheet for the home team, his goal getting past Cardiff-born Stefan Nubert at 04:05. This was followed at 07:09 with the first of four goals from Luke Piggott.

Ben Williams received 2-mins for interference at 7:41 and the Dragons further punished the Lions by scoring on the powerplay, the goal awarded to Cardiff's man of the match, Steven Deacon. Williams left the sin bin but was soon replaced by Richard Hodge who was sent off at 11:20 for hooking. The Dragons wasted no time in making the most of the situation, Steve Fisher scoring just 8 seconds later.

The onslaught continued as Michael Price overpowered the hapless Nubert with a short-handed goal at 12:11. At 5-0 down Lee Valley opted to change netminders, George Alley replacing Stefan Nubert for the remainder of the game.

Soon after the swap the Lions scored, Andrzej Maslak shooting at 14:26 with an assist going to Ben Williams. Lee Valley held Cardiff at bay (geddit?!) for the remainder of the period, George Alley facing eight shots.

Luke Piggott scored unassisted just two minutes into the start of the second period but then Andrzej Maslak retaliated with an unassisted goal of his own at 24:39. This was scored short-handed as Scott Beeson sat out 2-mins for delaying the game, a penalty called automatically when a puck goes out of play, whether accidental or not.

With the score 6-2 to the Dragons the Cardiff side decided to give their back-up netminder a chance to shine, Ross Piggott being replaced at 29:35 by Luke Takel.

Dragons' Mike Price got past George Alley at 31:51 with his second goal of the match and then it was the turn of Richard Hodge to score the first past Takel for Lee Valley. His goal came at 32:28 and was assisted by Andrzej Maslak, whose play had been outstanding throughout.

The gap between the scoreline narrowed further at 34:12, this time thanks to a goal from Stas Profokiev that was assisted by Romanas Fedotovas (in his first game as Assistant Captain). Shortly after, Fedotovas pounded a mightily slapshot that hit netminder Luke Takel. The goal was disallowed as the puck appeared to hit Takel's helmet before dropping over the line. Despite legitimate protestations from Captain Scott Beeson the referee refused to change his mind. This infuriated Fedotovas but he contained his frustrations, albeit temporarily.

Cardiff scored again at 39:47 and although the scoreline widened once more Lee Valley did at least have the satisfaction of drawing the period 3-3.

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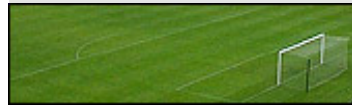
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The third period began and Lee Valley hit home first with a goal at 42:42 from Scott Beeson, assists going to Ben Williams and Richard Hodge. However, at the other end of the ice George Alley was facing shots from Cardiff almost continually. Gaping holes in the defence left him open to constant attack and both David James and James Manson scored.

Romanas Fedotovas finally got the goal he deserved at 50:24 but it was Ben Williams who stole the attention. A punch-up with James Manson left Williams with a nasty cut to the nose and a match penalty for his troubles (Manson receiving the same punishment).

Mike Price scored an unassisted goal for Cardiff at 52:04 and this is when Romanas Fedotovas could contain himself no more. The Cardiff goal was allowed to stand, despite it being scored in almost identical circumstances to Fedotovas' earlier disallowed goal. His protests were too strong for the ref's liking and he was giving a 10-mins misconduct penalty. Fedotovas became more abusive and the punishment was increased to a game penalty. Swearing and hand gestures from the enraged Lithuanian sealed his fate as he was dealt a match penalty (which results in him missing the next game).

With two defenders now ejected from the game (Williams normally a forward) it was unsurprising that Cardiff stepped up their attack and were able to score a further three goals, bringing the final score to 14-6.

06.01.07 Lee Valley Lions 5-1 Milton Keynes Thunder

This season's previous encounter with Milton Keynes saw the Lions fall 1-7, but the Lee Valley team had strengthened since September, both in numbers and attitude. This time it was the Lions who came out all guns blazing, Paul O'Neill being the first to get past netminder Mark Woolf. His goal came at 02:12 while Thunder's Matt Roberts sat out 2-mins for cross-checking, the assists going to Andrzej Maslak and Ben Williams.

Williams then stepped to the fore and hit home himself at 05:27. This was a second powerplay goal, Maslak assisting once more, along with O'Neill. Williams was then forced to the sin bin for 2+10 mins at 11:15, referee Szucs awarding the penalties for checking from behind.

This didn't dent the Lions' pace and when Williams returned Lee Valley stung their visitors with a third consecutive powerplay goal. Michael Jacobs passed to Ben Williams who fired an impressive shot that was touched in nicely by Paul O'Neill at 25:10.

The same successful line continued to dominate the game, a fourth goal from the Lions getting the better of Mark Woolf at 26:26. The scorer this time was Michael Jacobs with assists by Andrzej Maslak and Ben Williams.

Milton Keynes had more than double the number of shots on goal during the second period and something finally had to give. Aram Todd found a way through at 31:01, his goal putting paid to Stefan Nubert's chances of a shut-out.

With a lead of 4-1 the Lions could afford to relax a little during the

third period. They held their visitors at bay with ease while Michael Ranby gave a final flourish. Playing with the puck in front of the net Ranby appeared to have all the time in the world. He flipped it up past Mark Woolf to secure the fifth goal at 47:56, assists going to Justin Grant and Romanas Fedotovas.

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