

Lions are top cats after mauling Tigers

Lee Valley Lions 6, Vectis Tigers 2

THIS game was the start of an important pre-Christmas three-game series of matches that could dramatically turn the Lions' season around.

With this home game against the Vectis Tigers, who had beaten the Lions twice (including a 17-4 thumping), Sunday's road game at Slough and a match at Invicta the following weekend worth double points, three victories would move the team a long way up the league table.

Having been beaten twice by the team from the Isle of Wight, it was vital that the Lions came out strong and they didn't disappoint. They were heavily out-shot in the first session, but that statistic does not accurately reflect the play. The teams matched each other in the neutral zone and although Lions possibly had more possession, they didn't get many shots off. They did however, open the scoring as Stas Prokofiev converted a pass from Michael Ranby.

Just under two minutes later and a Tiger forward was left alone at the far post and the scores were level. Romanas Fedotovas was given a two minutes roughing penalty when a Vectis forward went down from a huge open-ice hit that was judged to be too high. Michael Jacobs had a good shot that just flew wide of the post, then the Lions went ahead again as Scott Beeson fooled the goalie. He broke down the right wing with two other Lions forwards crashing the net, and, seeing that the goalie was anticipating the pass, fired home.

Lee Valley were unlucky not to go two goals clear when a Michael Ranby shot rebounded from the goalie but as Michael Jacobs went to slot home with most of the net gaping in front of him, the puck bobbed and the chance went begging. Vectis equalised when James Hatfull lost an edge behind the net and the Tigers gained possession.

The Lions began to take charge in the second period, although early on both teams had chances. Andrew Boot in the Lions' net had possibly his best game for the team, dealing effortlessly with the shots thrown at him. Lee Valley had a good opportunity to go ahead, Michael Ranby provided Ashley Curtin with a terrific chance, but his backhand shot was somehow saved.

However, Freddie Trimble scored shortly afterwards – the only goal of the period, during which the Lions continued to dominate.

The third session was all Lee Valley as the team scored three unanswered goals and Andrew Boot turned away 11



Man of the match Andrew Boot in action

shots, making some fine glove saves. It was so nearly a spectacular start, as Scott Beeson let rip a rifle shot from the blue line which pinged off the post.

Three more shots reined in on the Vectis goalie before Romanas Fedotovas slotted home a rebound after a goal-mouth scramble.

The final two goals came on a powerplay. With two Vectis players sitting in the box, the Lions had a 5-on-3 advantage for one minute and 20 seconds. Firstly Michael Ranby got a well-deserved goal with an assist going to Michael Jacobs, then, with the Tigers back to four skaters, hard-working Joe Berry made it six.

This was probably the best game of the season so far for the Lions as all units communicated well, and there were none of the mistakes that had been seen in recent matches. Andrew Boot quite rightly won Man of the Match but there was further cause for celebration as Michael Ranby was the proud recipient of the Jack Petcey Achievement Award.

● Tigers recorded their second victory of the weekend when they beat Slough Harrier Hawks on Sunday,

also by a 6-2 scoreline, with in-form Ashley Curtin bagging two goals.



Michael Ranby with his certificate (PICS: Julianne Bonner)

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