

# Lions go out with a whimper after defeats

LEE VALLEY Lions suffered a wretched end to the ice hockey season with zero points and just one crumb of comfort: it is all over.

The Lions are now desperate for extra players to swell the depleted ranks because they will not want a repeat of Sunday's defeat.

Then, the Lions had just eight skaters available to take on table toppers Chelmsford Chieftains.

The result was a predictable rout. When the final horn brought down the curtain on the match and also the season, the Lions had conceded 12 goals and scored none.

But the nadir of a nightmare campaign had come the previous night, on Saturday, when the Lions lost at

home to the one side lower down the English National League South 2 League table than themselves.

A 7-4 home defeat to the lowly Slough Harrier Hawks was the worst possible preparation for a trip to Chelmsford the following day.

Slough arrived at the Lee Valley rink thirsty for revenge, after being trounced 16-1 by the Lions in January.

The visitors took the lead 10 minutes into the first period and they never looked back for the rest of the game.

The Lions hit back with three equalisers in the first and second periods.

But Slough took flight in the third as they fired in four unanswered goals to seal an unexpected win.

Ashley Curtin scored a consolation in the 58th minute, on the rebound from a Nick Alley slapshot that had bounced off of the Slough netminder's pads, but the damage

had already been done. It was one to forget, and the Lions certainly had plenty to think about against Chelmsford.

The ex-Premier League side had a maximum-sized squad waiting for the weary visitors.

But the game started well, with Nick Alley gaining a breakaway and Andrew Boot in goal making a number of solid saves in the opening minutes.

The hosts piled on the pressure as the Lions battled hard, but the opening goal came in the 11th minute of the first period from a Danny Hammond strike.

The goals came thick and fast with Boot contending with shots from all angles from that moment.

The double defeat means the Lions end the season second bottom of the table, 15 points ahead of Slough Harrier Hawks.

Lions insider Julianne Bonner said: "We kept going under extremely difficult circumstances."