

Lions help provide a thriller but lose out



Lee Valley Lions 3
Invicta Dynamos 5
(English National Ice
Hockey League)

LIONS fans arrived for the final game of the hockey season at the Lea Bridge Ice Centre expecting another good performance from their ever-improving team.

And while the final result was not what they wanted, none would have gone home disappointed following this thrilling game.

In the previous encounter in Gillingham earlier in the season the Lions took the Dynamos by surprise by taking an early lead and this time the game was very evenly balanced during the first period.

Stas Prokofiev hit a powerful shot while the Lions had a man advantage, only for ex-Lions' netminder Glen Jackson to see it at the last moment and make the save. A second powerplay found American Scott Pollak's point shot saved and the Jackson also got to the rebound effort.

The visitors also looked dangerous on the break and had a couple of good chances of their own, one of which was brilliantly kept out by netminder George Alley.

The home team had three good chances to take the lead themselves, with Michael Jacobs going close twice after being sent clear and Scott Beeson firing just over the goal.

Under five minutes in after the restart Stas Prokofiev broke clear, dragging the defence with him, Michael Jacobs crashed the net from the opposite side and the puck was put right on his stick for a perfect wrist shot to open the scoring.

With Invicta reeling Lee

Valley pressed home their advantage and James Hatfull evaded the defence to shoot the puck under Jackson's pads to make it 2-0.

It looked like the home team were going into the second break with a two-goal advantage, but with 90 seconds remaining Dynamos' Andy Smith broke clear and finally beat Alley to pull one back.

With everything to play for in the third and final period, the visitors came out a different team.

Flying Dynamos' forward Andy Smith levelled, and despite heroics in the home goal from Alley, Elliot Andrews hit a rocket to give the Gillingham-based team the lead for the first time.

The Lions were then caught on the break again by Smith to make it 4-2.

With under five minutes on the clock the Londoners refused to give up and were rewarded, when Nick Alley made it a one-goal game, wristing the puck home on a pass from Scott Pollak.

But Smith broke home hearts when he scored an excellent hat-trick clinching strike that caught Alley unawares.



Lions scorer Nick Alley in action against Invicta Dynamos
(PHOTO: JULIANNE BONNER)