

Brave Lions are tamed by Buffalo charge in exciting home finale

Hackney club end the season on a high despite consecutive defeats

Ice hockey

National League South II
Lee Valley Lions 4
Basingstoke Buffalo 7

Lee Valley Lions finished their campaign with one of their best performances against Basingstoke Buffalo. Buffalo were chasing second spot and had to be at their best to beat the east London outfit.

Lee Valley faced their formidable opponents with several team members missing and try as they might Basingstoke were prevented from scoring until the 10th minute.

Netminder George Alley was out of position and Lions' fans grimaced as the puck rolled over the line in slow motion.

Nonetheless, Basingstoke were not left feeling smug for long as seconds later Blair Dubyk powered a long-range slapshot past Aaron Tyler to level the score.

Neither side scored again during what was a fast and furious first period.

All credit must go to Alley in the Lions' net, who faced a punishing 28 shots on goal and gave a more confident display than his Basingstoke counterpart throughout the match.

Heavy-handed

Lee Valley started the second period another man down, youngster Tim Johnston having received 5+ game for hooking in the first of a number of heavy-handed

penalties from referee Adams. Calum Mathieson was the unlucky recipient of the second as he was awarded 2+10 for checking to the head after his opponent ducked at the wrong moment. Philippe Mueller became casualty number three, receiving 5+ match for the same offence. Basingstoke scored two goals in under a minute, but Calum Heath brought one back from the home side at 24.04 and at the buzzer Lee Valley were still only trailing by one goal.

Depleted

However, by the start of the final period the Lions' numbers had depleted further. Having lost Johnston and Mueller, Mathieson was also unable to ice, a shoulder injury putting an premature end to his game.

There was no discernable decline in the Lions' commendable efforts, but although Joe Berry and Dubyk both scored impressive goals, Buffalo finally pulled away to become 7-4 winners.

Lee Valley Lions faced league-leaders Slough Jets the following day with only 10 men. Despite this massive disadvantage, they again put in fantastic effort.

The mighty Jets were left shell-shocked when the Lions were ahead 3the first period 3-1.

Although they increased their lead to 4-1 at the start of the second period it was inevitable that tiredness would begin to overwhelm and it did not help that Blair Dubyk was forced to play much of the game on a broken skate.



Blair Dubyk was in form again for the Lions at the weekend. Pic by Julianne Bonner