

Sunday 27th August 2006

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Lions and Tigers roam ice jungle

Sep 23 2005

THIS season's English Premier League has seen the return by two of the teams to their traditional names.

Telford have dropped the longwinded 'Wildfoxes' in favour of the altogether more aggressive 'Tigers', a name that longstanding fans of the sport will remember fondly.

Solihull meanwhile, have ditched the 'Kings' name that they were saddled with following a merger with Milton Keynes four years ago. They have reverted to their traditional name of 'Barons', and with it, their traditional place at the bottom of the League!

With no Slough Jets game on Saturday, yours truly headed off to Alexandra Palace Ice Rink in Muswell Hill to watch a third revival.

It has been ten full seasons since the Lee Valley Lions last took to the ice. They effectively folded when talk of the Superleague putting a team into the Docklands arena came to fruition.

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The newly re-founded club have got permission from the owner of the Lions brand and logo, Steve James, to call themselves the 'Lions', and they have entered the English National League South, in place of the now defunct Slough Harrier Hawks.


With ex-Hawks players Kevin and Owen Murphy, Ben Osborne and Daniel Sampson, and one of last year's Jets, Graham Bellamy, all on the

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new team, they played a challenge match against Haringay Greyhounds.

It was a second meeting between the teams, Haringay having won the initial League encounter by the odd goal in five, and the Lions still await their first win, going down 4-2 on Saturday.

But this was an exciting game, if a little slow compared to the EPL. With almost nothing between the teams in terms of ability, the result came down to a little inexperience on the part of Lee Valley, in the final period.

Having opened the scoring at 22.46 with a shorthanded goal by Lions captain' Darren Wakeling, the visitors then conceded two goals as their defence failed to clear the lines.

It was level at 2-2 late in the second period when new import signing, Romanas Fedotovas, assisted by Sampson, beat Haringay netminder David Wride, on a powerplay.

The third period was a scrappy, penalty strewn affair in which Craig Metcalf put the home team ahead at 50.16. Lee Valley coach, and ex-Lions player Eddy Joseph, called a time-out and pulled netminder George Alley with 18 seconds remaining, but the tactic backfired when Jamie Hirst netted at 59.58.

This weekend, the Lions are at home to Streatham Redskins in their third League fixture, and a first win for the revived team cannot be far away.

With Kevin Murphy currently the Lion's leading scorer, and the team improving with each match played, hopefully the Lions are back for good, and with a strong Slough connection.

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