

Football Spartans WFC v Falkirk




SPARTANS OPEN SEASON WITH 11 GOAL HAUL

Report by Edmund Brown and Photos by Carson Ralton

In the first game of the 2012 season, Spartans were victorious against Falkirk, winning 11-1 at Ainslie Park in what turned out to be a one-sided affair.

After being undefeated throughout pre-season, Spartans controlled this season's opener from start to finish, with four goals from Trisha McLaughlin, a hat-trick by Lana Clelland, a brace by Sarah Ewens and strikes from Captain Louise Young and Diana Barry, with Emma Lyons getting Falkirk's consolation goal.

Spartans came out the traps straight from kick-off and were a goal up inside the first two minutes thanks to a Sarah Ewens strike. Full-back Ashley Nicolson played a long ball down the right wing to Molly McKean who, with her first touch of the ball, played a through-ball to Ewens who took one touch before chipping the ball over Keeper Ashley Watson and into the back of the net.

With only five minutes on the clock Trisha McLaughlin  doubled the Spartans lead after bundling the ball over the line. Lana Clelland picked the ball up around the half way line and drove at the Falkirk defence before unleashing a fierce shot Keeper Watson was unable to hold and hence parried it straight into the path of Ewens who flicked it over to McLaughlin to prod home from two yards out.

Spartans continued to heap pressure on the Falkirk goal and

could have been further ahead inside the first ten minutes. Nicolson swung a free-kick over from the right which managed to travel all the way through to Louise Mason who quickly turned and played a through ball for Ewens. With only the keeper to beat, the Spartans forward fired the ball inches wide of the right hand post.

Falkirk, who were struggling to get a foothold against a strong Spartans side got a sight of goal 20 minutes in, however Captain Emma Lyons fired over the ball from 15 yards out after some great play down the left wing by Kerry Kennedy.

This Falkirk opportunity was against the run of play and moments later Spartans finally got their third of the match with McLaughlin getting her second of the game. Louise Magilton charged down the left wing, skipping past three Falkirk challenges before cutting infield and firing a right foot shot towards the bottom left hand corner. However Keeper Watson was equal to the shot but could only parry it straight to the on-rushing McLaughlin who flicked a header into the empty net from three yards out.

On the half hour mark McLaughlin completed her hat-trick, finishing off a well worked move. Ewens broke play up inside the Falkirk half and split the defence with an accurate through ball to McLaughlin who, after seeing the keeper off her line, chipped the ball into the roof of the net, and giving her side a 4-0 lead at the half time break.

Within minutes of the restart, McLaughlin got her fourth of the game, crashing the ball into the top corner from the edge of the area. Clelland drove down the right wing and, after reaching the by-line, crossed to McLaughlin who fired into the top corner past the diving Watson.

Moments later Spartans increased their advantage with Ewens tapping the ball home from two yards out. McKean drove down the wing and after stepping inside the fullback, fired in a

cross for Ewens to side-foot home.

Just before the hour mark Spartans were given another opportunity to increase the score when the referee awarded the home side a penalty after Lauren Gallon fouled Clelland just on the edge of the area. Ewens stepped up and fired the ball to the right but keeper Watson got down well tip round the post.

Spartans finally make it 7-0 just after the hour mark with Clelland driving a powerful free kick into the top corner from 25 yards out. Louise Young picked the ball up and was fouled just outside the box. Clelland stepped up and curled a right foot shot into the top right hand corner.

The pressure on the Falkirk goal continued and McLaughlin had an acrobatic effort smash off the bar after. Magilton charged down the left wing and, after reaching the by-line, sent the ball over to Ewens who's shot deflected into the path of McLaughlin who sent an overhead kick crashing off the bar.

The onslaught on the Falkirk goal continued and Clelland got her second of the game placing the ball home into the bottom corner after some accurate passing by Di Barry and Young. Barry picked the ball up just outside the box and played an angled ball through the defence for Clelland, who timed her run perfectly, to place into the bottom corner past the helpless Watson.

With Ten minutes left on the clock, Spartans made it 9-0 with Captain Young getting on the score sheet after Magilton and McKean exchanged passes down the left wing. McKean reached the by-line and crossed for Ewens who's shot deflected towards Young who, on the second opportunity, fired the ball into the back of the net.

The Spartans accurate shooting continued and with only seven minutes left on the clock Clelland got her hat-trick, sending a thunderous shot into the top corner from 25 yards out.

Substitute Barry collected the ball just outside the box and laid it back to Clelland who curled the ball home.

✘ With only five minutes remaining, Falkirk got a consolation goal with Captain Emma Lyons tapping home from six yards out. Hannah Ritchie picked the ball up on the half way line and, after playing a quick one-two, sent over a cross to the far post for Lyons to tap home past keeper Rachel Harrison.

However, with the game heading towards injury time Spartans completed their impressive afternoons display with Barry getting her team's final goal of the game. Clelland swung in a corner from the right which was cleared by the Falkirk defence. However, McKean picked the ball up and flicked the ball over the defence for the on-rushing Barry to fire into the bottom corner and give her side an 11-1 victory.

Spartans head coach Debbi McCulloch was delighted with the performance although disappointed to not keep a clean sheet. She said: "I was really pleased with the performance with a number of players getting on the score sheet. It was great to see Di Barry back and seeing Louise Young get one as well was special especially as she doesn't score that many."

Spartans: Rachel Harrison, Ashley Nicolson, Louise Magilton, Heli Hakkinen (Chloe Fitzpatrick, 65 mins), Louise Moultray, Louise Young, Lana Clelland, Molly, McKean, Trisha McLaughlin (Di Barry, 65 mins), Louise Mason (Nichola Sturrock 30 mins), Sarah Ewens (Ann Taylor, 78 mins). Subs: Ann Taylor, Chloe Fitzpatrick, Diana Barry, Nichola Sturrock, Victoria Farquhar

Falkirk: Ashley Watson, Hannah Ritchie, Susanna MacLellan, Sarah Quilietti, Kerry Kennedy, Lauren Gallon, Lisa Sutherland, Jade Gallon, Emma Lyons, Eva Rule, Lauren Hastings. Subs: Rebecca Robertson