

# Football – Spartans WFC v Kilmarnock



*Report by Edmund Brown and Photos by Carson Ralton*


## SPARTANS FRIENDLY FIRE PROVES TOO MUCH FOR KILLIE

Spartans continued their winning start to the season with a solid 9-2 win over Kilmarnock in a friendly game at the Ainslie Park Academy.

Kilmarnock took the lead in this friendly preseason game through a tap in by Sam McManus, however Spartans were able to get back into the game and took a 4-2 lead into the break through strikes from Molly McKean, Ann Taylor (2) and Sarah Ewens with Kilmarnock's McManus getting a second goal of the game to reduce the deficit.

The second half saw Spartans take control and their high fitness levels punished the tiring Kilmarnock defence with Taylor completing her hat-trick, Ewens completing her brace and strikes from Nichola Sturrock, Olivia Lukasewich and an own goal from Shannon Morgan.

Spartans started the brighter and could have been a goal up inside the first three minutes when Nichola Sturrock's first-time volley was tipped round the post by keeper Lauren Grant. Sarah Ewens picked the ball up just inside the Kilmarnock half and wrestled herself free of two challenges before charging down the right wing. As she reached the by-line she sent over a cross to the far post where Sturrock fired in a volley which Grant tipped round the upright for a corner to the home side.

 However, 13 minutes in Kilmarnock took the lead with Sam McManus tapping in from six yards out. Kirsty Munro latched

onto a defence splitting pass by Morgan Hunter and, as she reached the by-line sent over a cross to McManus who squeezed the ball home past Louise Moultray and keeper Charlene Lessells.

Kilmarnock started to get a handle on the game and could have increased their lead as McManus went through on goal. McManus, who was tormenting the Spartans defence with her speed, found herself in space just outside the box however, as the striker sped towards goal, keeper Lessells came out to challenge and cleared the immediate danger.

Within five minutes Spartans got their equaliser with Molly McKean firing in an unstoppable shot from 20 yards out. McKean picked the ball up just inside her own half and played it out to the left wing which Sturrock controlled before laying it back to McKean just outside the box. The midfield maestro charged towards goal and fired in a shot which nestled into the top corner.

Within a minute of the restart Spartans went ahead when Ann Taylor, from the corner of the box, fired in a looping shot that smashed off the post and into the net. Captain Louse Young collected possession midway through the Kilmarnock half and played in Taylor on the right wing. Taylor looked up and sent over a looping cross which smashed off the upright and into the back of the net.

Sarah Ewens increased the Spartans lead on the half hour mark as she side-footed the ball home from 12 yards out. Ewens latched onto a McKean pass and, after getting past the Kilmarnock defence, slotted the ball home past the on-rushing keeper.

Kilmarnock did manage to half the deficit ten minutes before the break after McManus charged through on goal past the Spartans defence. As keeper Lessells came out to clear the ball hit off the No9 and ended up in the back of the net.

With minutes before half time Taylor finished off a well worked move, flicking the ball home from 12 yards out. Young picked the ball up from a loose goalkeeper throw and played the ball to Taylor whose quick feet took her past the defence before flicking the ball home.



Spartans started the second half as they finished the first, passing their way through the Kilmarnock midfield with McKean at the helm. The bustling No10 played a through ball to Sturrock on the right wing who, after reaching the by-line, sent over a fierce cross to Ewens. However, as the striker aimed to shoot, the keeper managed to collect the ball and ease the pressure on the Kilmarnock goal.

Five minutes later Spartans again came close with Louise Young sending a shot just wide of the upright. Ewens won the ball back just on the edge of the box and played it to Taylor whose cross reached Sturrock on the right wing. Her cutback found Young in acres of space who fired in a shot which went wide of the mark.


Spartans did however increase their lead moments later when trialist Olivia Lukasewich tapped in from four yards out after some great wing play by Taylor. Taylor drove down the left wing and sent over a cross which Sturrock, on hearing Lukasewich's shout, left for the on-rushing right-back to tap into an empty net.

Sturrock, herself, then managed to get on the scoresheet, curling in an unstoppable shot past the advancing keeper Grant. Louise Mason collected the ball just inside the Kilmarnock half and played a clever ball through that reached the excellently timed run of striker Sturrock, who after looking up, curled a left foot shot past the stranded keeper.

Spartans continued to create chances and Taylor completed her

hat-trick on the hour mark, sending a powerful header into the top corner. Sturrock collected the ball from Louise Magilton and swung a first time cross to Taylor on the edge of the area which the winger met with her head sending in a bulleted header past the diving hands of Grant.

On the 80<sup>th</sup> minute Spartans got their penultimate goal of the game as Kilmarnock's midfielder Shannon Morgan clearance found the back of her own net. McKean, wide on the right wing, created space and, after charging towards the by-line, crossed to the penalty spot to the on-rushing Ewens. However before the striker could meet the ball, Morgan headed the ball over her own keeper and into her own net.

Ewens finished off the scoring for Spartans curling a  delightful curling shot into top corner and completing the afternoon's scoring minutes before the full time whistle.

Debbi McCulloch, Spartans Head Coach felt her team played well in parts and was pleased with the overall performance. She said: "We could have played a lot better with us taking a bit longer than I would like to start playing in the first half. The second half we showed a lot more passion and desire, scoring some really good goals."

Teams:

Spartans: Charlene Lessells, Heli Hanson, Louise Magilton, Louise Moultray, Victoria Farquhar, Louise Mason, Molly McKean, Louise Young, Ann Taylor, Sarah Ewens, Nichola Sturrock, Olivia Lukasewich

Kilmarnock: Lauren Grant, Becky Haddon, Nicole Murray, Kayleigh Weeks, Katie Patterson, Megan McInnes, Shannon Morgan, Morgan Hunter, Kirst Munro, Sam McManus, Rachel Webb, Kim Dick