

# Spartans WFC play last pre-season friendly




*Spartans played against Hamilton Academicals this weekend in what was the team's last chance to warm up before the 2012 league campaign commences next week.*

Report by Edmund Brown & Photos by Carson Ralton

Spartans started the brighter in this hard fought encounter taking a 1-0 lead into half time with Ann Taylor finishing off with a tap in from eight yards out. However Hamilton came out fighting after the half time break and five minutes after the restart got their equaliser through Gill Inglis. Hamilton continued to press the Spartans defence and took the lead through a Sarah Crilly strike, however, as the game proceeded into injury time, Spartans got their equaliser with Trisha McLaughlin tapping in from three yards out ending the game all square.

With the wind behind them, Spartans created the better of the chances in the first half with Sarah Ewens heading towards the by-line only to see her cross go out for a corner. Moments later and Spartans were again in on goal with Ann Taylor playing in Lana Clelland on the left wing. Clelland danced past one challenge before cutting infield and fired in a cross that was well taken by keeper Megan Cunningham.


 Clelland, who was only just back from representing Scotland Under-19s in La Manga, started to trouble the Hamilton defence and, after picking the ball up midway through the Hamilton half, charged towards goal only to see her shot from distance fly well wide of the right hand post.

Moments later Louise Mason flew down the right wing, twisting

and turning past two defenders before firing in a cross to Ewens who, with some quick control, flicked the ball over the on-rushing defender before cutting the ball back to Clelland on the edge of the box. However Clelland's shot sailed over the bar without troubling the Hamilton keeper.

However the away side did get their own opportunity to score and, after breaking up a Spartans attack, rushed downfield with Toni Mason outstripping the Spartans defence only for Bobbie Beveridge to slide in sending the ball clear for a Hamilton corner.

Hamilton were starting to penetrate the Spartans defence on a more consistent basis and Mason went close to giving her side the lead. However her shot went inches over the bar after some great build up play by Helen Templeton down the right wing.

On the 20 minute mark, Spartans took the lead in this  tightly fought contest with Ann Taylor tapping in from six yards out. Ewens picked the ball up midway through the Hamilton half and took on the defence, chipping it over one defender before firing in a fierce shot that Keeper Megan Cunningham was able to palm away. However, the keeper could only watch as the on-rushing Taylor picked up the pieces and tapped into an empty net.

At 30 minutes Ewens, who was causing the Hamilton central defence problems every time she picked the ball up, found herself on the 18 yard line and, after twisting and turning around the defenders she sent over a cross only for it to be cleared for a corner. Molly McKean's out-swinging cross found Ewens on the edge of the area, but her shot at goal was cleared off the line and away from danger.

Hamilton came out flying in the second half, and within five minutes of the restart squared the game with a Gill Inglis goal from seven yards out. Hamilton charged up-field with Mason hitting the by-line on the right wing before cutting the

ball back to Cheryl McCulloch. McCulloch steadied herself before shooting towards goal only to see it deflect for a corner. As the corner came in Jo Hutchison came to clear only to see her punch go straight to Inglis. With her back to goal, the Accies player swivelled and fired into an empty net.

With 65 minutes on the clock, Hamilton should have taken the lead as McCulloch picked the ball up and charged towards goal before playing an inch-perfect pass to Sarah Crilly down the right wing. With only the keeper to beat, Crilly fired in a shot destined for the bottom corner, only to see it narrowly miss the target and creep inches past the post

However within a minute of this opportunity, Hamilton did take the lead with Crilly netting from 12 yards out. Straight from the goal kick, Crilly picked the ball up and danced past the challenge of Victoria Farquhar before burying the ball into the top corner.

With challenges flying in, this game turned into a midfield battle with very few clear cut chances being created. Spartans did however come close to equalising with 75 minutes on the clock with Ewens stinging the hands of the Hamilton keeper. Mason picked the ball up on the left wing and slid the ball through to Ewens on the edge of the box. With her second touch of the ball, Ewens curled in a delicate shot only to see Cunningham dive and smother the ball.

With the game heading into injury time and with Hamilton destined for victory, Spartans levelled the score with the last kick of the ball. McKean picked up possession inside the Hamilton half and drove at the defence before placing the ball through to the on-rushing Nichola Sturrock wide on the right wing. Sturrock, after skipping past the challenge, fired in a low cross along the six yard line for McLaughlin to fire into the back of the net.

[Spartans](#) Head coach Debbi McCulloch felt her side learnt a lot

from a very difficult game. She said:- “Friendlies are played for a couple of reasons – to improve fitness and try out new tactics. After playing so well in the first half, I felt we should have been more than 1-0 up. However the girls battled well to get the equaliser and this sets us up well for the start of the league.”

[Spartans](#): Charlene Lessells, Bobby Beveridge, Heli Hanson, Louise Moultray, Louise Magilton, Molly McKean, Louise Young, Lana Clelland, Ann Taylor, Sarah Ewens, Louise Mason, Nichola Sturrock, Jo Hutchison, Victoria Farquhar, Trish McLaughlin

Hamilton Accies: Megan Cunningham, Elaine Fleming, Katie Reilly, Gill Inglis, Toni Mason, Helen Templeton, Kirstin McGuire, Jacqui Seagrave, Jen Rogers, Terri Donnelly, Cheryl McCulloch, Ashley McDonald, Cara McBrearty, Sarah Crilly, Ruadh Houston