

Football – Spartans WFC lose some points




This was not such a good weekend for Spartans WFC.

In the Scottish Women's Premier League game at Ainslie Park, the match between Spartans and Inverness ended 2-2 with the away side coming from two goals down to take a share of the spoils.

Spartans managed to take a two goal lead into half-time through a brace by striker Sarah Ewens, but Inverness produced a determined response , fighting back through a strike by Natalie Bodiam and a last minute awarded penalty which was calmly converted by Captain Karen Mason ending the game all square.


Spartans started the game with great confidence and within the first minute almost took the lead through a Louise Mason shot. Diana Barry started the move, flicking the ball back to Sarah Ewens whose first time pass found Louise Mason wide on the right however her shot went inches wide of the post.

 With the wind picking up the pressure on Inverness continued and after just five minutes Chloe Fitzpatrick sent a sizzling shot wide of the near post after some precise build-up play by Molly McKean. And it was McKean who was next to test the Inverness goal however her shot from 22 yards sailed well over the bar.

Even though the game was turning into a midfield battle with very few clear cut chances, Spartans were continuing to test the visitor's goal and 20 minutes gone Lana Clelland sent a shot that went just wide of the far post. Louise Magilton picked the ball up on the half way line and the fullback

charged into space before playing a delightful pass over the oncoming defender into the path of Clelland who, in one swift move, cut infield and fired in a right foot shot that failed to trouble the keeper.

Spartans vice-captain Barry, who was wearing the Captain's armband due to Louise Young being out injured, was starting to orchestrate moves from the front and it was through her creative passing that allowed Spartans to test the Inverness keeper on the half hour mark. Barry found Mason on the right who played a first time ball in to Ewens but as she went to shoot Karen Mason slid in to flick the ball out for a corner.

Eight minutes before half time Spartans finally took the  lead with Ewens firing a right foot shot into the bottom corner of the net. Ewens herself picked the ball up on the edge of the area and, after stepping past one challenge charged into the area sending a low right foot drive into the bottom corner, giving the home side the lead.

Within three minutes of that opening goal Ewens got her second of the game, from 30 yards out, the striker sent a fierce lobbing drive past the outstretched hand of the Inverness keeper doubling both her goal tally and her team's half time lead.

The second half started in similar fashion to the first with Spartans pressurising the Inverness goal. Bobbi Beveridge, who had come on just before half-time for the injured McKean, picked the ball up on the halfway line and after a mazy run through a field of players smashed a fierce right foot shot that flew well wide of the mark.

However, Inverness, moments later had their first clear-cut opportunity and after some exquisite build-up play saw Finella Annand play the ball through to Becky Dingwall who, in using her pace to get past the Spartans defence, was just unable to beat the alert Rachel Harrison who was quick off the mark to

clear the danger outside her area.

This opportunity was just a warning of what was to come and moments later Inverness reduced the deficit with Natalie Bodiam firing the ball home. After latching onto a Karen Mason clearance, the striker used her strength to hold off Victoria Farquhar before burying the ball past the diving Harrison.

☒ Inverness continued to press the Spartans goal and again a clever ball over the Spartans defence was only just cleared by Keeper Harrison who managed to head clear with Bodiam bearing down on her.

Bodiam was starting to cause the Spartans defence some serious problems due to her pace and movement and moments after her last opportunity the number 11 latched onto a Kirsty Deans pass and in one swift movement turned and fired a shot that whistled past the post.

With only 20 minutes remaining Spartans came close to regaining their two goal advantage with substitute Ann Taylor firing in a right foot shot that went just wide of the top corner. Fitzpatrick picked the ball up on the half-way line and flicked the ball over to Claire Crosbie who found the run of Barry who quickly played in Taylor who was clear on the right wing. The striker, with the Inverness defence charging down on her, fired in a first time shot which sailed just past the post.

However this was a momentary lapse in the Inverness pressure with Dingwall and Bodiam causing the Spartans defence serious problems. Dingwall, after managing to get clear of the chasing defence, fired in a shot that Harrison tipped onto the bar, and collected at the second opportunity.

With five minutes to go, the game started to open up and this allowed Spartans to come close to sealing the victory. Ewens, who was on a hat-trick, latched onto a Fitzpatrick through ball and, after taking the ball past two defenders, flicked it

past the advancing keeper only to see it hit off the post and away for a goal kick.

It was however Inverness who left the ground the happier as, with a minute to go, the away side were awarded a penalty with Victoria Farquhar, who had been solid in defence, was adjudged to have pushed Inverness striker Bodium just inside the area. Up stepped Inverness Captain Mason to fire the ball home and ending the game all square with a cup-tie between the same two teams taking place next week.

Spartans coach Mike Ross was disappointed with losing a two goal lead and felt his team should have played better. He said: "I am very disappointed with the result, after looking comfortable at half time our standards dropped and this allowed Inverness to get back into the game. However next week we play them again and I am looking for a strong and spirited response from everyone in the team."

Spartans: Rachel Harrison, Ashley Nicolson, Louise Magilton, Louise Moultray, Victoria Farquhar, Chloe Fitzpatrick, Molly McKean (Bobbie Beveridge, 41 mins), Lana Clelland (Claire Crosbie, 70 mins), Louise Mason (Ann Taylor, 72 mins), Diana Barry, Sarah Ewens. Subs: Ann Taylor, Nichola Sturrock, Heli Hakkinen, Bobbie Beveridge, Danni Pagliarulo, Claire Crosbie

Inverness City Fc: Kim Jappy, Marnie McArthur, Sarah Main, Megan McCarthy, Karen Mason, Finella Annand, Hannah Markley (Megan Gillies, 69 mins), Kirsty Deans, Hannah Gordon (Becky Dingwall, 5 mins), Lorraine Cadden, Natalie Bodiam. Subs: Becky Dingwall, Beth MacDonald, Megan Gillies

Report by Edmund Brown and photographs by Carson Ralton.