

Football – Aberdeen v Spartans WFC



Report by Edmund Brown

Photos by Carson Ralton

Spartans rock solid performance in Granite City earns three points

Spartans took all three points in the Scottish Women's Premier League beating Aberdeen 2-1 at Aberdeen's Sports village to go fourth in the league.

With all types of weather conditions being witnessed in the Granite City and with the Aberdeen surface stifling the passing moves of both teams, the crowd had to wait until the start of the second half for the deadlock to be broken with Sarah Ewens volleying home her tenth goal of the season for the Edinburgh side. Within five minutes the home side equalised as Rebecca Dempster crashed home a sweeping shot into the bottom corner of the Spartans net. However it was the away side who stole the show as with only six minutes to play they were awarded a penalty as Ewens was taken down by Keeper Lauren Sangster. Up stepped Barry to smash the ball home to seal the victory and take the three points back down the road to Edinburgh.

Spartans started the brighter and could have been a goal up inside the first ten minutes with a thunderous Molly McKean strike flying inches past the post. Bobbie Beveridge skipped down the right wing and cut inside before firing over a cross to Sarah Ewens whose shot, from the edge of the area, was charged down only as far as midfielder McKean who, with a flick of the hips, fired in a fierce drive that flew inches

past the left hand post.

Moments later Spartans again came close to opening the scoring after they were awarded a corner which Claire Crosbie rose to send a header towards goal only to see it cleared off the goal line. Ewens wrestled clear of the Aberdeen defence and as she charged into the box Loren Campbell flicked out a foot clearing the ball from danger. Lana Clelland took the corner and sent over an out-swinging cross to the far post for Crosbie, who had risen above all challengers, to head towards goal. However Campbell, who was standing on the post, cleared off the line and away from danger.

On the stroke of half-time Spartans were awarded another corner after Ewens again wriggled free of two challenges before Lindsey Gauld managed to send the ball clear with an outstretched leg. Clelland, with the resulting corner, again swung a ball to the far post for Crosbie to head towards goal but Lauren Sangster was able to get her gloves to it and prevent it from crossing the line.

Nine minutes after the half time break Spartans took the lead through Ewens volleyed shot from eight yards out. Barry collected the ball from a throw-in on the left wing and, after flicking it past McKenzie, sent over a looping cross to the near post where Ewens, at full stretch, sent a volley into the bottom corner past the outstretched hands of Sangster.

However the away side's lead only lasted five minutes as, against the run of play, Rebecca Dempster fired a sweeping shot into the bottom corner of the Spartans goal. Victoria McIntosh escaped the grasps of Chloe Fitzpatrick and sent over a low cross to Dempster who, from the edge of the area, sent a sweeping low drive around the defence and into the bottom corner.



Straight from kick-off, Spartans charged straight up-field and had a McKean shot from outside the box deflected wide by Murray. Louise Young fed the ball down the right wing to Barry who quickly played a one-two with Lana Clelland before sending in a wicked cross that was cleared to the feet of Mckean to let fly with a dipping right foot drive which was deflected off the foot of Murray.

Moments later Spartans were again close to regaining the lead as Barry laid the ball on for McKean however her shot from 18 yards out flew well over the bar. Barry created space for herself just inside the box and after twisting and turning fed the ball back to Mckean whose first shot sailed over the bar.

With 15 minutes left on the clock Spartans again came close to securing the victory as Ewens escaped the attentions of both central defenders and charged towards goal. However as she

steadied herself to shoot, Campbell slid in to tap the ball away for a corner.

Three minutes from the end Spartans finally got their just rewards as the referee pointed to the spot after Ewens, who had sped clear of the Aberdeen defence, was sent crashing to the ground by keeper Sangster as the striker tried to round the home side's number 1. Spartans Keeper Rachel Harrison fired a ball up to Clelland who cut inside and chipped a ball over the top for Ewens to run onto. However as she played the ball past the on-rushing Sangster, the keeper brought the forward down. Up Stepped Barry to fire the ball into the bottom right hand corner to give her side a crucial 2-1 victory sending the Edinburgh side into fourth spot.

Spartans Head Coach Debbi McCulloch felt the conditions didn't help in creating a memorable game but was pleased to get the three points. She said: "Today was one of those games where the three points were the most important factor. The surface and weather conditions proved difficult and with the ball always taking a while to get back into play meant we struggled to get any tempo in our game. But the girls never gave up and scored a great goal by Sarah Ewens and Di Barry was so calm and composed in disposing of the penalty."

Teams:

Aberdeen: Lauren Sangster, Loren Campbell, Lindsey Gauld, Melissa Aitkenhead, Cheryl Anderson, Victoria McIntosh, Kelly Forrest, Susan Murray, Kirsty McKenzie, Rebecca Dempster, Aimee Ross. Subs: Hannah Clews, Amy Innis, Megan Maver, Natasha Bruce, Claire Martin

Spartans: Rachel Harrison, Ashley Nicolson, Claire Crosbie, Victoria Farquhar, Chloe Fitzpatrick, Bobbie Beveridge, Lana Clelland, Molly McKean, Louise Young, Diana Barry, Sarah Ewens. Subs: Ann Taylor, Louise Mason, Nichola Sturrock, Louise Moultray