

Football – Spartans WFC v Hamilton Academicals



SHARE OF THE SPOILS AS ACCIES SCORE LATE EQUALISER

Report by Edmund Brown and Photos by Carson Ralton

Spartans and Hamilton Academicals shared the points in their Scottish Womens Premier League meeting at Ainslie Park with a last gasp equaliser by the away side finishing the game 4-4.

With both teams taking turns at leading during turbulent weather in North Edinburgh, it was the home side, with a Louise Young strike in the dying minutes, who thought they had taken the three points. However with the last kick of the match, Hamilton's Toni Mason stole the show to end the encounter all square.

Spartans started with a bang and were a goal up inside the first three minutes with Diana Barry chipping the ball over the Accies keeper Megan Cunningham from the edge of the box. Molly McKean picked the ball up on the half way line and placed the ball through the middle of the Accies defence for

the well timed run of Barry to latch onto before she sent a lobbed shot over the advancing Cunningham and into the back of the net.

Within ten minutes Accies came close to going level with Cheryl McCulloch muscling her way past Spartans centre-half Louise Moultray only to see her fierce shot palmed away by keeper Rachel Harrison.

However, this was just a warning shot as, with 30 minutes played, Accies Sarah Crilly stole in to score at the near post from six yards out. Crilly pressurised Louise Magilton into giving the ball away just outside her own box and the forward charged into the area before dispatching a right foot shot into the corner of the net.

Straight from kick-off Accies had to rely on the goalkeeping attributes of Cunningham who pulled off a point blank save from Spartans Captain Louise Young. Lana Clelland got free down the left wing and, as she reached the bye-line, the winger sent over a cross to the far post for Young to head towards goal. However, in an instant, Cunningham flicked out a hand to pull off a great reaction save and avert the danger on her goal.

It was Accies who went ahead straight after this opportunity with the home side again giving the ball away on the edge of their own box allowing forward McCulloch to pounce upon and fire the ball into the corner of the net.

Spartans were again left with their heads in their hands as with only minutes left before half-time, a Trisha McLaughlin shot smashed off the post with the net wide open. Barry picked the ball up midway through her own half and played the ball through to Sarah Ewens who, with the keeper rushing out to narrow the angle, flicked the ball out wide to McLaughlin who sent a placed shot towards the empty net. However, as she was about to turn and celebrate the ball came crashing off the

post and away from danger.

Five minutes after the break Spartans did get back on level terms as Ewens fired a fierce right foot shot into the back of the net. After latching onto a Harrison goal kick, the forward wrestled her way past two challenges before sending a dipping shot into the top corner of the Accies net.

Spartans proceeded to again take the lead in this topsy-turvy match with Barry getting her second of the game after tapping in at the near post. Ewens flew down the right wing and as she reached the six yard line she cut the ball back to Barry who, having made a darting run slid the ball home from four yards out.

However the home sides lead was to only last ten minutes as Carolina Richardson restored parity with an accurate placed shot that nestled in the top corner of Harrison's net. Helen Templeton flicked the ball into the path of Richardson who, after cutting in from the left, sent a vicious shot that Harrison couldn't prevent from ending up in the back of the net.

With time running out the game looked like petering out however, the Spartans Captain had other ideas as she crept forward unnoticed. After winger Clelland had a shot charged down the ball fell to the left foot of Young who, from the right corner of the box, curled a low drive into the far bottom corner.

With more than 90 minutes on the clock Spartans must have thought they had won this contest however Accies Toni Mason had other ideas as she connected with an out swinging corner to head the ball into the net and finish the league encounter 4-4.

Spartans Head Coach, Debbi McCulloch, was disappointed to not get the three points as she believes her team deserved more than a draw. She said: "I thought we played some of our best

football so far this season but unfortunately we made some defensive errors that allowed the opposition back into the game. Of course the weather conditions didn't help however it was the disappointment of not getting more from the game after several missed chances in front of goal."

Teams:

Spartans: Rachel Harrison, Louise Magilton (Danni Pagliarulo, 77mins), Lana Clelland, Chloe Fitzpatrick, Diana Barry, Molly McKean, Bobbie Beveridge, Trisha McLaughlin, Louise Young, Louise Moultray, Sarah Ewens.

Unused Subs: Jo Hutcheson, Ashley Nicolson, Ann Taylor, Louise Mason, Nichola Sturrock, Sarah Archibald

Hamilton Academicals: Megan Cunningham, Kirstin McGuire (Helen Templeton, 75 mins) , Cara McBrearty, Terri Donnelly, Sarah Crilly, Gillian Inglis, Jennifer King, Toni Mason, Jacqui Seagrave, (Amy Bulloch, 75 mins), Cheryl McCulloch, Carolina Richardson (Jennifer Rogers, 87 mins).

Unused Subs: Elaine Fleming