

# Women's Hockey – SHU Women's District League Hockey



Originally slated to be a four-way tournament to be played at Stirling's Forthbank Stadium, only Erskine-Stewarts-Melville II's, Kinross and MCC Western V's were able to travel.

Played in a round-robin format, it meant that two of the three teams would have to play back-to-back matches. (Unfortunately, The Reporter was unable to remain 'on site' for the third match so the result, whenever the SHU confirm, will be added in the 'Comments' Section below)

## Match 1

That dubious honour fell firstly to ESM II. Kinross were their opponents in the first match of the day and for the first few minutes, Kinross looked the better team and, indeed, only a fine save from the ESM goalie prevented the opener from being scored after just four minutes. However, this seemed to a mere blip as ESM forced Kinross on the defensive and kept their opponents deep in their own half. Winning several penalty corners in the process, it was their turn to come close after 20 minutes when a deflected shot from yet another corner slid agonisingly past the post. Another five minutes of pressure were again nearly rewarded as it was the the Kinross goalie's turn to save the day, parrying a shot from open play. This was followed up seconds later by another scrambled clearance from a corner. ESM didn't have it quite all their own way however, and a rare foray into the 'D' by Kinross nearly ended with a goal, but for a goal-line clearance by a defender. Following yet another near miss from ESM, the half ended all square – somehow – at 0-0.

The second half of the match started, more-or-less, where the first ended with an ESM shot sliding past the post by inches. Kinross were a bit more on the ball this half, but after about 15 minutes play ESM's pressure finally paid off. The goal was scored from a slight deflection, which hit the top of the goalie's pad, before dribbling down the pad edge and trickling over the line. Not the 'Hollywood' goal they'd hoped for, but

a goal's a goal and they all count. 1-0 to ESM and just over 15 minutes to play.

The rest of the second half was a bit more even with Kinross forcing a save from the ESM 'keeper, which kept the Edinburgh side ahead. Both sides continued to have their chances, but on the stroke of full-time it was Kinross' final chance which told. Collecting the ball in the 'D' from a long pass, the Kinross No.6 slipped the ball past two defenders and the outstretched 'keeper, to where one of her team mates was waiting on the far post. All she had to do was deflect the ball into the net to draw the match level. Almost immediately the hooter blew for full time and ESM had had victory stolen from under their noses.

Moral being – It's not over until it's over!



## **Match 2**

With only a 15 minute break, ESM were up again, this time against MCC Western V. This was to prove a much more evenly matched contest, with Western fielding a team with a great spread of experience, including a former GB Olympic medal winner. Not so many penalty corners this time around, but most pressure came from Western in the first few minutes. Both teams had chances on goal, but the defences held out and with neither goalie being troubled to any degree, it was to be 18 minutes in before either team got the breakthrough. That team was ESM. After regaining possession on the 25 metre line, a quick through ball into the area saw ESM's No.26 get in behind the defenders and strike the ball into the far corner of the goal. 1-0 to the Edinburgh side and loads of time left on the clock. However with five minutes left in the half, Western struck back. Building an attack down the left, a short pass into the area was collected and a firm strike of the ball saw it past the defender and 'keeper to hit the backboard and level the scoring. With the game continuing to see-saw back and forth the half drew to a close one goal apiece.

The second half again started fairly close, but for most of the rest of half ESM probably had the majority of the play and territory. In spite of attacking down the left and right and up the middle, there was no way past the Western defence.

Until 20 minutes in, at least. ESM's goal scorer, managed to get around the defence on the left and push the ball past the 'keeper. However, the first match hoodoo raised it's ugly head again and the ball passed in front of the far post by inches to go over the dead ball line. A few minutes later, ESM's 61 broke through, but had the ball picked off the end of her stick in the act of shooting and another chance went begging. Pity they didn't strike home with either as the final 10 minutes of the match belonged more and more to Western as ESM began to tire. With less than a minute to go and another draw on the cards, a long pass was collected deep in the ESM half and with defenders struggling to keep pace, the Western player ran the ball into the 'D'. The goalie came rushing out to block the shot, but the Western player eased the ball past to a fellow attacker who was left with an easy strike past the defender on the line to finish the match off 2-1.

This second last minute goal wiped out any chance that ESM II's had of taking the trophy, the winning of which was played out in the final match between Western and Kinross.