

Ice hockey – Birzins a hero as Fife edge Lightning



Todd Dutiaume guided Fife Flyers to a narrow win over Milton Keynes

Elite League: Fife Flyers 3, Milton Keynes Lightning 2

Latvian defenceman Ricards Birzins claimed the game-winner as Fife Flyers edged Elite League newcomers Milton Keynes Lightning at Kirkcaldy.

The blue-liner, who has played in several countries before coming to Fife, slotted home unassisted with less than 12 minutes left of a tense struggle at Rosslyn Street.

Earlier, Fife went 2-0 ahead but Scots-born Peter Russell's rookies powered back to level and set up a grandstand finish.

It was Charles Mosey who broke the deadlock after build-up play involving Shayne Stockton and James Jorgensen after eight minutes.

But it took until the 29th minute for Fife to increase their advantage with Chase Schaber netted after assists from Evan Bloodoff and Liam Heelis.

Six minutes later the English side struck back. Kevin Gibson scored their opener unassisted.

And two minutes later Francis Verreault-Paul levelled with Denny Kearney and Guillaume Doucet involved in the build-up.

Miika Wiikman, the current Elite League Player of the Week, had been the busier netminder.

And he was beaten for a third time when Birzins claimed the go-ahead goal to the delight of home fans.

The victory was Fife's fourth in five league games and their second in a row and it takes them on to eight points in the 12-strong table.

Milton Keynes stay on six points from eight fixtures and they have now lost their last two fixtures.

They visit Braehead on Saturday (7pm) and Edinburgh on Sunday (6pm) while Fife are at Manchester Storm on Saturday (7pm).