

Tartan Hearts broken by Canada in Commonwealth Games showdown

COMMONWEALTH GAMES: WOMEN'S HOCKEY: fifth/sixth place: Scotland 1, Canada 3; seventh/eighth: New Zealand 1, India 1 (India win shootout 2-1).

Scotland finished sixth in the Commonwealth Games women's hockey tournament in Birmingham after being beaten 3-1 by Canada in the fifth/sixth place play-off, and it was a disappointing lesson to be learned for some of the older members of the squad.

The Tartan Hearts (pictured before the push-off in Birmingham) were looking to equal their best Games finish, fifth, achieved on two separate occasions, but Sarah Robertson, Scotland's captain, admitted that Canada obviously did their homework on their rivals.

The 28-year-old added: "We did not have a lot of opportunities and they punished us on the opportunities we did have and that came from our sloppiness."

The Borders-born Olympian was disappointed in the way the squad started the game against the Canadians, ranked No 15 in the world, two places above Scotland, in a game played under clear blue skies and bright sunlight at The University of Birmingham.

And the Great Britain squad member said and it was a strange challenge having four days off during a tournament and coming back out after the 2-0 defeat to world No 3 Australia on Wednesday.

Robertson a former University of Edinburgh star, now playing

for London club, Hampstead & Westminster, added: "We park this and move on as we have another tournament in two weeks time in Dunkirk, France, and we must make sure we retain our place at the top tier of European hockey. We have three big games coming up in France and we need to make sure we are firing then."

Robertson added: "Every game is a lesson at this level and we have nine people playing their first Commonwealth Games and a number of young players.

"Two people got their first caps in our first game in Birmingham but, for some of us, this tournament is not new.

"Some of us have been in three or four of these events and for some of us it is very disappointing to get that lesson again."

The next Commonwealth Games is in Melbourne which, Robertson said, is an exciting opportunity but despite the defeat in the Midlands she firmly believes the Scotland squad in general is heading in a really good direction.

And she added: "I hope most of the group can stick around and we can go on to achieve something special in four years time."

Basically, Scotland, who beat the Canadian side 2-1 in a 30-minute match in the week before the Games, were second best here.

The robust North American combine fielded two experienced players up-front with a total of 390 caps and 146 goals between them and they opened up Scotland in their first attack after four minutes, Hannah Haughn netting at the back post after a bustling run from Brienne Stairs, Canada's top marksman with 108 international goals to her credit.

Scotland dug in and levelled after 15 minutes, Great Britain squad member, Amy Costello (University of Edinburgh) converting low to the goalkeeper's right from a penalty

corner.

However, Scotland were struggling to find any real rhythm but at least had a foothold, but two minutes later the deadly Stairs/Haughn combination counted for a second time, Haughn providing the finishing touch close in after another driving run by Stairs had cut open the Tartan Hearts.

Scotland's sporadic attacks failed to put the Canadians under any consistent pressure and it was no surprise when Karli Johansen netted No 3 after 41 minutes from a penalty corner award. When the Scots did break through they found Canada's two goalkeepers, emerging talent Marcia Laplante and experienced Rowan Harris equal to the task.
