

Flyers seeing Stars in Challenge Cup quarter-final

Fife Flyers will square-up to Dundee Stars in the quarter-final of the Viaplay Challenge Cup. Belfast Giants face Nottingham Panthers, Sheffield Steelers go against Cardiff Devils and Coventry Blaze are drawn with Guildford Flames, the current leaders of the Viaplay Elite League.

Elite League: Fife Flyers 6, Nottingham Panthers 1: Zack Phillips claimed a glory double and assisted on two other strikes as Fife Flyers mauled Nottingham Panthers 6-1 at Kirkcaldy.

Mikael Johansson also claimed two goals and two assist in the emphatic win which sent home fans home with a smile on their faces.

It was Phillips who opened Fife's account after ten minutes after being set-up by Janne Kaakkonen and Reece Cochrane.

And the home crowd were on their feet again 11 minutes later when Chris Lawrence popped in No 2 with Dumfries-born Bari McKenzie and Laakkonen setting up the chance.

No 3 arrived after 24 minutes when Janne Kivilahti latched on to a Mikael Johansson pass after he was fed by Phillips and it got even better for home fans when their favourites netted the fourth goal less than three minutes from the second break. Lucas Sandstrom started the move and he transferred the puck to Phillips and Johansson slotted.

Surprisingly, both teams had 24 shots on goal by the end of the second stanza, but it got worse for the visitors when fired-up Fife, sponsored by Wolseley, claimed goal No 5. Johansson had the final touch after good work from Brayden Sherbinin and Laakkonen. Time 52min 37sec.

Panthers finally made their mark on the scoresheet with a short-handed goal just over a minute later when Michael Caruso netted with an assist from Luke Ferrara, but Fife were not finished and Phillips made it 6-1 with less than five minutes left with Laakkonen and Johansson involved.

Todd Dutiaume's men were outshot 33-28 but still came away with the win to complete a four-point weekend after their narrow 2-1 victory at Braehead over Glasgow Clan on Friday.

Coach Dutiaume (pictured in his office by *Nigel Duncan*) will be smiles better after that result as it lifts Fife onto 12 points from 16 games, the same as sixth-placed Nottingham, but the Midlands club have played only 13 games.

Dundee Stars, sponsored by Kit-Maft, are two points adrift in eighth position and have also played 16 games with Manchester Storm now ninth with nine points from 13 starts. Glasgow Clan, sponsored by Aspray Glasgow

West, prop up the rest with five points from 16 fixtures.