

Hadfield praise for Grange despite 3-0 defeat

Sean Hadfield expressed his pleasure at the performance of Grange Edinburgh Ladies despite a 3-0 defeat by Clydesdale Western on a glorious afternoon at Peffermill which was bathed in warm, Autumnal sunshine.

Grange's coach argued that his squad were playing against a side coached by Scotland's international senior men's coach, Derek Forsyth, and included Scottish internationals including Bronwyn Shields and Millie Steiger who appeared for the Tartan Hearts at the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham.

And, Clydesdale Western, have consistently challenged for honours at the top level of Scottish hockey, gaining valuable experience of how to win. In fact, Forsyth's squad moved second with this win.

Grange were promoted last season and were, Hadfield said, finding their feet in the big league. That showed in the first quarter which was dominated by the West of Scotland club with Grange relying on breakaways.

During that spell the visitors went 2-0 ahead. Karin Belch opened the scoring after ten minutes, underlining her side's early dominance, by netting from Clydesdale Western's third penalty corner of the game.

And, minutes later, Steiger was in the right place at the right time to prod home No 2 after the fourth short corner of the game from Clydesdale rebounded off Grange's goalkeeper.

Grange, however, urged on by Hadfield, grew into the game and Alex Duggan had, arguably, the best chance of the game when she picked up the ball on the right side of the D but sent her shot wide of Clydesdale Western's far post.

The Edinburgh combine went further behind when Anna Hoolaghan provided the finishing touch from another penalty corner, but Grange plugged away and prevented the Glasgow side adding to their total.

Hadfield, a former Scotland international goalkeeper, was pleased that his charges blanked the final quarter. They were under pressure but dogged defence kept their rivals in check and Hadfield said: "Yes, were were 2-0 down after the first quarter, but we kept going. On Saturday, champions Watsonians beat Inverleith 14-0 and we did not collapse.

"We changed a few things to tighten up and the girls did really well and worked hard, limiting Clydesdale's chances, but Clydesdale Western are a quality team, they have a really good coach in Derek (Forsyth) and they have international players.

"Bronwyn (Shields) and Millie (Steiger) controlled the game, but you expect that from international players.

"We are newly-promoted and we are improving in the top league. We had chances, Alex Duggan had a great chance near the end of the first quarter, the best chance of the match in my opinion, but she did not make it count.

"We are learning and we are having a really good season. We should have won on Saturday at Glasgow University when we drew 1-1. They are one place below us in the table, but we are seventh in the table with seven points and we play Uddingston next Saturday and they are two places below us with six points.

"Hopefully, we can get a result and finish the first half of the season on a high, but we have made real progress and have put in pleasing performances in the last two weeks."

PICTURE: Midfield action at Peffermill between Grange Edinburgh Ladies and Clydesdale Western by **Nigel Duncan**