

Flyers urge fans to cheer them to Challenge Cup win

Fife Flyers are appealing for fans to fill the arena for the Viaplay Challenge Cup, semi-final, first-leg against high-flying Sheffield Steelers (Wednesday, face-off 19.00).

Jeff Hutchins, Fife's club's associate coach, said the club have been boosted by their four-point weekend when they beat The Trade-Mart Dundee Stars 4-1 on Tayside after a 3-2 win over Coventry Blaze at The Fife Ice Arena.

The weekend results means Fife, sponsored by Wolseley, move into the eighth position in the ten-strong table and into a play-off spot. Flyers have 24 points from 36 games, one point ahead of Glasgow Clan and two in front of Stars.

However, Steelers are second in the table with 52 points from 34 games, showing the gulf between the sides.

The men from the House of Steel have scored 139 goals and shipped only 75, the lowest goals against in the league. Fife have scored 86 goals and let in 126.

Hutchins, in charge of the bench as head coach, Todd Dutiaume, is away looking after family business, revealed that he challenged the squad to be better last weekend after a disappointing run of results and he said: "They did a tremendous job."

Steelers tails are up after snapping a two-game losing run at the Utility Arena in Sheffield with a 4-2 victory over Manchester Storm in front of over 7,000 fans.

Aaron Fox, Steelers' coach, said his men produced an improved 60 minutes against Storm and said the start was important. He added: "We had energy from puck drop and we got off to a lead

which we haven't done for a long time. The second period we took over and we closed it out pretty smoothly."

Fox will be looking for a similar performance on Wednesday and Fife will want to keep the scoreline tight with the return leg in The House of Steel scheduled for Wednesday, February 15 (19.30)

The second-leg of the other semi-final is also on Wednesday night when Belfast Giants host Guildford Flames and they go into the game in a strong position after a 4-0 victory in Surrey in the first-leg.

PICTURE: Courtesy of the Viaplay Elite League. Action from Sunday at Dundee