

Fife fail in weekend double bid but Stars burn Flames

Ice cool Kyle Osterberg played a major part as Fife Flyers moved off the bottom of the ten-strong Elite League table with a shootout win at fourth-placed Belfast Giants, the first win by the Kirkcaldy club in Northern Ireland since September 2018.

The American winger scored the game-tying goal in the dying minutes as the Kirkcaldy club clawed their way back from 3-0 down and then scored THREE times in the shootout.

No wonder locals were calling it a “masterclass” and Fife coach Tom Coolen was a happy man, tagging his squad the “never-say-die team”.

Coolen admitted that he was about to ask another player to take the penalty shot before being prompted by the team and he said: “Sometimes you have to listen. It was the correct decision.”

More than 7,300 fans watched the action at the SSE Arena in Belfast, sponsored by Stena Line, and Flyers also iced new goaltender, Kevin Lindskoug, who also played a major part, saving a penalty shot which sparked major celebrations for the visitors who were heavily outshot but still took the two points.

Meanwhile, 9,368 fans saw Glasgow Clan, sponsored by Aspray Glasgow West, edged 3-2 at league leaders Sheffield Steelers after the Scots were 3-0 down after 6min 43sec and 1,755 fans watched Coventry Blaze win 2-1 in overtime at Trade-Mart Dundee Stars, John Curren scoring 1min 39sec into the extra session.

Unfortunately, Fife could not add a second weekend win when they went down 4-3 at home to bottom club Nottingham Panthers on Sunday, despite winning the opening session 2-1, much to the disappointment of the home fans in the crowd of 1,198 at The Fife Ice Arena.

It started well for the home side when Vitalijs Pavlovs opened the scoring after five minutes with Lajeunesse supplying the assist.

And they went 2-0 ahead with Teemu Pulkkinen was set up by Max Humitz in the 13th minute, but Panthers hit back through Mathieu Lemay six minutes later.

Lajeunesse made it 3-1 five minutes into the middle session but under two minutes later Panthers pulled one back through Otto Nieminen and they levelled six minutes later when Hugo Roy hit the rigging.

Lemay claimed his second and Nottingham's fourth on the power play 1min 46sec into the final period and Fife were unable to level in a game in which they were outshot 36-26 by Panthers who snapped their eight-game winless streak and pushed Flyers back into bottom position in the table.

Dundee, however, collected their fifth point in three games with a 4-2 road win at Guildford Flames and move back into the top five.

PICTURE: Action from Belfast courtesy of the Elite League