

Scots move up hockey rankings after beating Canada

Scotland beat Canada 3-1 to rise to 16th position in the world women's field hockey rankings, their highest position in many years.

Heather McEwan, Ellie MacKenzie and Katherine Holdgate found the net, two of the goals coming in the second-half, at Glasgow's National Hockey Centre.

Chris Duncan, head coach for the Tartan Hearts, said the scoreline could have been greater if his squad had taken more of the chances they created.

The inclusion of Jen Eadie into midfield proved decisive, the Scot having been released from the Great Britain squad for the game.

She dovetailed well with rising star Eve Pearson, who plays her hockey in Germany, but Duncan said that his squad switched off which caused the loss of Canada's consolation goal.

The sides drew 1-1 in the first game of the two Test series on Saturday and the Edinburgh-based coach said: "This was a different game (from Saturday). We were cagier in the first half, but I was pleased by our intent to stick to the game plan.

"We bossed the midfield in the second-half and scored two good goals and we also had lots of the ball and created more chances than Saturday.

“However, the game shows the dangers of playing at this level, you can’t switch off for a second. We were comfortable at 2-0 then it went to 2-1 and things became a little more edgy for a while.”

Scotland weathered the storm and Duncan added: “It’s a really good win and it is particularly pleasing to beat a higher ranked side, which you don’t get to do very often.”

Scotland now look forward to two more games against the North Americans also at Glasgow’s National Hockey Centre, on Tuesday and Wednesday night (both games at 19.30), but these are uncapped fixtures and Duncan plans to experiment, giving opportunities for players to show what they can do.

On Sunday, the deadlock was broken as half-time approached. Emily Dark fizzed an inch-perfect, 40-yard pass down the left for MacKenzie who beat the full back and found Sarah Jamieson in the circle. Jamieson sent the ball to the far post and onto the stick of McEwan who finished.

The second goal came when MacKenzie pounced on the ball in the centre of the circle to stroke it home, but Canada pulled one back at the start of the final quarter from a three-pass move finished by Mikayla Stelling to cut the deficit to 2-1.

Victory was sealed with under three minutes remaining when Scotland were awarded a penalty stroke and Katherine Holdgate sent the ball into the top left corner for 3-1.

PICTURE: Glasgow’s National Hockey Centre