

Lions keep up unbeaten run at home

Ice Hockey

AFTER suffering two disappointing losses on the road, Lee Valley Lions bounced back on Saturday with an emphatic 7-3 victory over Oxford City Stars.

The return to form was all the more satisfying as the Lions had been crushed by the Stars 6-1 only the previous month.

Scott Beeson opened proceedings for the Lions with a slapshot goal set up by Calum Heath and Gary Dodds.

A second goal followed midway through the period, passes from Dodds and Beeson resulting in Richard Hodge slotting the puck in from the side of the net. Dodds, Beeson and Hodge soon shocked Oxford with a third goal, this time Dodds knocking the puck past the keeper in almost identical fashion to Hodge.

The Stars had clearly not expected Lee Valley to make such a strong start but they were now in big trouble and needed to engage a rapid turnaround if they were to salvage the game. Despite calling a time-out, Oxford still could not dampen the Lions' enthusiasm and the period ended with the visitors

trailing 3-0.

The second period was markedly different, an error by netminder Steve Grout leading to Oxford's first goal at 22:36. This seemed to shake the Lions' confidence and gave Oxford their much-needed boost.

Lee Valley managed to hold their opponents at bay and Heath gave the home side their fourth goal at 32:12, assisted by Adam Peach.

A defensive error allowed Oxford's Warren Jones to break away from the pack and score unassisted at 35:43. James Clarke narrowed the scoreline to 4-3 just before the end of the period and a minor skirmish followed, resulting in James Hatfull sitting out two minutes for roughing.

Lee Valley had allowed Oxford to dominate the second period but they were not going to permit a repeat performance. The final period opened with Beeson breaking away from the centre line and scoring while short-handed, his goal unassisted.

Oxford finally began to crumble, Hodge and Heath doing the final damage. Lee Valley Lions remain unbeaten at home this season and their slick 7-3 win pushed them into double points in the league table.



DOUBLE: Calum Heath.
Picture by Julianne Bonner

The Lions travel to Swindon to face the Wildcats on December 17, then are back at the Lee Valley Ice Centre on January 7, 2012, to challenge local rivals, Romford Fury (face-off 5.15pm).