

Relentless Romford are too fast for Lee Valley Lions

Ice Hockey news

National League

Lee Valley Lions 2

Romford Fury 8

The new year failed to bring any good fortune for Lee Valley Lions last Saturday as they suffered a humiliating defeat against arch rivals, Romford Fury.

Fury set off fast and furious, but Lee Valley matched the pace and despite a number of shots, it wasn't until 11:29 that Simon Kears got past netminder Steve Grout with a close-range goal. Neither side could find the back of the net for the rest of the period and it was nearly halfway through the second before Blair Dubyk equalised for the Lions, his unassisted goal coming on a powerplay.

Romford hit back with a

blistering blue-line slapshot, Sean Martin doing the damage, completely unhindered by the Lions' defence.

At the end of the period the score was still 2-1 to the visitors and the game could have gone either way.

However, given the speed of Romford's play, the hope was that fatigue would set in, allowing the Lions to battle to victory in the third, often their strongest period.

Sadly this was not to be the case and the lacklustre Lee Valley side paid a heavy price for not keeping up with the competition.

A skirmish erupted soon after the final period started thanks to Mel Bidder aiming a slapshot at Steve Grout well after the referee had blown his whistle to stop play.

Although Bidder received a 10-minute misconduct pen-

alty, this didn't deter his team-mates, who hammered in three goals before Grout was rested in favour of George Alley.

Alley didn't fare any better, lasting just over 30 seconds before Matt Brown wrapped the puck around the goalie's skate and over the line, putting Romford Fury 6-1 ahead. An error by Alley in the Lions' net then gave Romford their seventh goal, Sean Martin the scorer.

Lee Valley's youngsters were the only shining lights in an otherwise infuriating game. Alan Go gave a plucky performance in defence, but it was local lad, 18-year-old Joshua Irish, who stunned fans with his slapshot goal at 56:57, his first for the team.

Irish, who lives on the Northwold estate and aims to become a lawyer, started his

hockey career at Lee Valley at the tender age of seven and progressed through the Junior development system at the Leyton-based club before making his debut for the senior Lions at a challenge game against Streatham Redskins at the start of the season.

With victory assured, Romford still didn't let up against their hosts and put their eighth goal past a hapless Alley at 58:12.

The disastrous result was not only the first time Lee Valley had been beaten at home this season, but the loss allowed Romford to creep above them in the league table.

The Lions hope to recover their winning form in time for their next game, which is at home against Basingstoke Buffalo this Saturday, at 5.15pm.



■ Hackney-born Joshua Irish scored for Lee Valley Lions on Saturday in their 8-2 defeat
Pic: Julianne Bonner