

Sportscene...

Ice Hockey

WATSON INSPIRES LIONS

By HOWARD BASS

AMERICAN Bill Watson helped Lee Valley Lions to a remarkable ice hockey debut in Division One of the Heineken League.

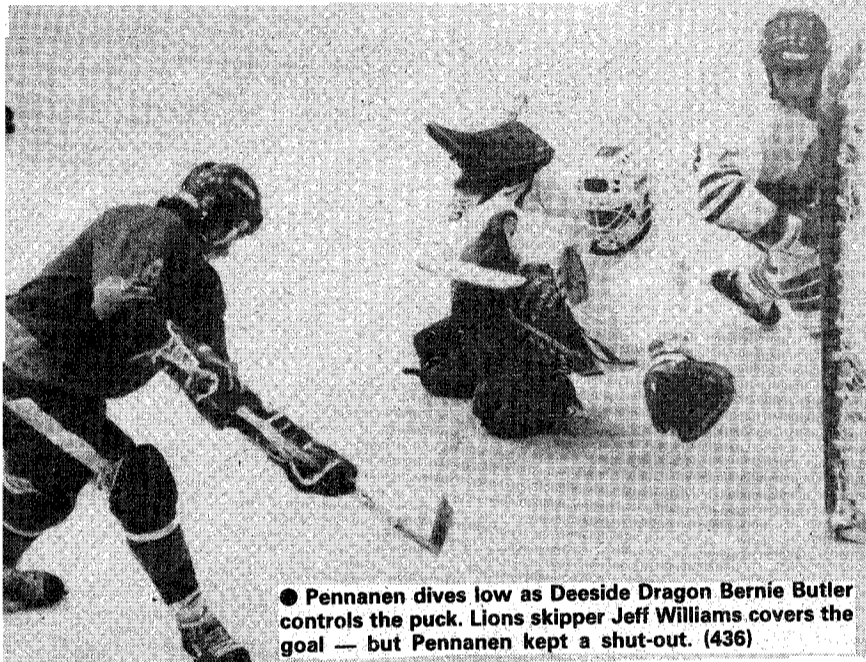
Watson, an acquisition from Minnesota University, hit four goals in each of two convincing victories by the Lions in the season's first full league weekend programme.

The Lions won 6-1 at Grimsby and then massacred Richmond, their London rivals, 16-1 at Leyton.

ICE HOCKEY



● Down he goes! Lions keeper Vesa Pennanen manages to get a clearer view of the puck with Deeside's Karl Creamer on the deck. (435)



● Pennanen dives low as Deeside Dragon Bernie Butler controls the puck. Lions skipper Jeff Williams covers the goal — but Pennanen kept a shut-out. (436)

Lions slay Dragons!

LEE Valley Lions defenceman Eddie Joseph celebrated the birth of his daughter last week with a rare goal in the Lions' 12-0 win over fiery Deeside Dragons at Lea Bridge Road on Sunday.

The Lions, who top the league, put on a show in the third period that thrilled the near capacity crowd, running rings round the side they thought would be their toughest opposition of the season so far.

But Deeside could have scored many times if it hadn't been for the brilliant keeping of Vesa Pennanen.

"It means an awful lot to a goalkeeper to keep a shut-out," said the dazzling Finn after the game.

"It's the first one I've had since I've been in England, but it's very pleasing to have conceded only two goals in three games," he added.

And it was another import, American Bill Watson, who stamped his authority on the game, scoring five of the 12 Lions goals.

Watson scored twice in the opening period, striking three more in the third period. Fellow American Will Fish also scored and young Canadian Simon Murray scored two good goals to preserve the Lions' 100 per cent record in the league.

After the game Coach Dave Wurthman said: "It wasn't a brilliant performance from us — and I would have thought they could have scored a goal. The defence still needs tightening up and we missed some open chances. One thing's for sure, Bournemouth will be much tougher!"

The Lions will have to adapt to the small Bournemouth rink, but are hopeful again for victory.

"We came together well in the third period," said Wurthman. "But we are going to have to play a lot better if we're to beat the better teams — but we can beat them."

Sunday's match was postponed for an hour as Deeside were held up in traffic.

Wurthman said: "We were kept waiting a long time which never helps, but we weren't going to let them into the game, like we did earlier in the season at Deeside. Our finishing wasn't that good — we could have won by 20 goals.

"It was fantastic for Vesa, but we must remember that we've played probably the worst four teams in the league first — the top five are very good, so we've got to put this win behind us and think ahead to Bournemouth on Sunday. But at least this has given us the chance to work our way up to the best teams," he added.

Having scored just four goals in the first two periods against Deeside, the Lions needed some goals — and fast. In the third period they did just that, slipping into a higher gear and slamming eight past the luckless Deeside keeper, Partington.

With Freddie Sandford off the ice with a 12 minute penalty — two minutes for elbowing, and 10 minutes for giving the referee abuse — Deeside were in a power play situation.

But Simon Murray responded to that in the perfect way — coolly slotting home an unassisted goal after skating the length of the ice.

Two further unassisted goals were scored by skipper Jeff Williams and Bill Watson, and Watson combined well with Ronnie Austin — each player scoring from the other's assist.

Murray scored another unassisted goal, and the Lions' 12th and final goal came from Dave Rapley, assisted by Eddie Joseph and Dave Petrie.

Manager Mike Smith said: "It was a funny game. We really got it together in the third period, but we were bad in the first and only slightly better in the second.

"We are going to have to build up a good lead from the start against Bournemouth, because they came on very strong in the second period when we played them before," he added.

"Bournemouth have a small rink and it will be difficult for us to adjust because we've learnt to play good hockey on a good rink. We're the only country that allows league hockey to be played on a rink as small as Bournemouth's so it will be interesting to see what happens," said Smith.

ICE HOCKEY

Double top—that's an ice one, London!

by Howard Bass

TWO LONDON ice hockey clubs are riding high this weekend.

Streatham Redskins gained their third successive Heineken League victory with a 9-4 away triumph over Whitley Warriors. That made them joint Premier Division leaders with Murrayfield Racers, each with a maximum six points.

Steve Rich notched three goals, Gary Stefan and Craig Melancon two each and Tony

Goldstone and Mark Howell were the other scorers for Streatham, who were five up after 16 minutes.

Lee Valley Lions are also top dogs. They head the First Division table—also with three straight wins—after trouncing Deeside Dragons 12-0 at Leyton last night.

Bill Watson scored five goals, taking his tally to 13 in three games. Simon Murray hit two, with one apiece from Geoff Williams, Ronnie Austin, Will Fish, Eddie Joseph and Dave Rapley.

Lee Valley Lions, London's other undefeated pace-setters, head the First Division after a third straight win, scoring eight in the final period of their 12-0 home success over Deeside Dragons.

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Prolific Watson

Five goals from Bill Watson brought his three-match tally to 13, and Finland's Vesa Pennanen, in the Lee Valley goal, achieved the Lions' first shut-out.

Fife Flyers clinched their place in the Bluecol Cup final, on Dec. 1, with a 9-4 home win against Murrayfield. With five goals, Dave Stoyanovich, the leading cup scorer, took his tally to 31 in seven games.

For the Bluecol Cup semi-final, to decide which English team will meet Fife in the final, Durham have qualified to meet Solihull or Streatham, whose home and away clashes next Sunday and Tuesday should resolve that issue.

The weekend's closest game was Peterborough's 3-2 win at Southampton. Alcide Juras claimed all three Pirates goals. Richard Kortje, back after knee injuries, netted the first for Southampton, who might have reversed the outcome had Darren Adams not missed a penalty shot.

HEINEKEN LEAGUE—Prem. Div: Cleveland 7, Nottingham 1—Murrayfield 10, Ayr 2—Whitley 4, Streatham 9. First Div: Grimsby 14, Richmond 4—Lee Valley 12, Deeside 0.

BLUECOL CUP—Altrincham 3, Whitley 11—Durham 16, Crowtree 21—Fife 9, Murrayfield 6—Southampton 2, Peterborough 3.