

LEE VALLEY LIONS v TELFORD TIGERS

Sunday 5th October 1986 Norwich Union Cup

Good evening and welcome to the Lee Valley Ice Centre for the visit of the Shropshire lads by the name of Telford Tigers, who probably hitched a ride on the Lions' team coach last night! Yet another landmark in our history this, it's the first time we've played the same team back-to-back in the same weekend.... okay I know I bore you with this stuff but it's my job!

For those of you who read last week's programme, the player who last season went the longest time in league games without receiving a penalty, except Ludek and the goalies, was Chris Leggatt. After receiving 33 minutes in his first 7 games, he then picked up a 2 minute penalty in his 9th game, at home to Solihull (12/1/86) went penalty-less for TEN games and picked up a final 2 in his penultimate game, at home to Crowtree (29/3/86). In fact, he's currently on a run of EIGHT away Division One games without receiving a penalty. Good luck Chris, we're with you all the way. While we're with Chris I'd like to say hello to Debbie Leggatt, his newly-wed wife. Alright, I know it was about six weeks ago, but I haven't had the space to mention the happy event before.

Many reasons have been thrown at me after last Sunday's game, saying that "Fred" should score more goals and "Bill" should do this, and we could do with another player in this position, etc, etc.. But the truth is we were outclassed by a better side who managed to overcome the absence of Neil Browne and Tony Goldstone in the locker room after the first period and came out the Streatham-of-old, Mike Rocchio grabbed all the headlines, which incidentally were bigger in the National Daily Telegraph than the Local London Standard.. would the sports editor take note. We don't want half-page photos of Japanese golfers on a driving range or daily articles on that very popular spectator sport.. SQUASH! Anyway back to my point, it was Craig Melancon who did the damage with a magnificent 8+6, he was certainly in one of his better moods. Whatever you do, don't compare the final score with that against Telford (10-5) and Slough (12-6) because Streatham don't play like that. The London derby had been won and they just wanted to rub our noses in it!

Our injury list is growing, largely after the visit of Stars on Saturday. Mark Nicholls had a stick in his eye, Geof received a nasty cut on his upper lip which has now swollen up, and Tari missed the game at Streatham with a leg injury. Ludek missed both games at the weekend through illness. That brings our injury/illness tally this season to eleven players, though only four have actually missed games because of it.

I read in the IHNR Hotlines last week about the Oxford-Altrincham encounter, which reported three Aces players receiving facial injuries, including a broken nose. This may be coincidental to involve Oxford in both games, but the point I'm trying to make is, something must be done to stop this dangerous and life-destroying tactic of hitting people in the face with the stick. I can quote many people last season on the subject: Garry Unger "learn to have respect for a guy's head", and another "the puck spends 95% of the game on the ice, so that's where the stick should be".. there are many more people who expressed their opinions on this matter. The answer is NOT to issue all players with perspex visors like the junior ones (as donned by Mark Salisbury and others). There should be stiffer penalties for players who draw blood in this way. A lean penalty for the first offence, as it can be accidental, but for a second offence there should be a fine or ban imposed. This can be the solution to the goalies' face-mask problem too. As Charlie wrote last week, lifting the puck was an unusual phenomenon, and most players never wore helmets. There's no doubt that visors and guards restrict the player's comfort, and in turn the quality of play which they can produce. I suggest, if there isn't a rule already (if so I haven't seen it used) that a player who draws blood with a high-stick (above waist-high) should be given a 2 or 5 minute penalty with 10m Misconduct, and any illegal use of the stick with dangerous intent, if not by a butt-end or spear.. the shaft itself can present a nasty blow.. should be rewarded with some form of Match Misconduct, requiring a game ban. Any hockey-fights should be reduced to gloves or fists affairs. If these are already rules in the IIHF book (which is available in the skate shop) then I would like to see them USED not ABUSED.

Last week's debacle was not softened on the Monday morning by the news of Slough's belated debut in Division One, mauling Oxford (not them again) at Oxpens Road by the tune of 15-1, Dave Rapley scoring six of them. Off-hand I would guess that is Stars' biggest home defeat in Heineken play, just beating our 14-2 win there last season. A real surprise, which brought a slight bend at the corners of my lips, by now scraping the floor, was the fall of Altrincham, who opened with three straight wins including one against Glasgow, losing 5-7 at Richmond. The Flyers impressed me in the pre-season friendly here, far more than Oxford (more mentions than Filly Flyer in Ronnie's Roundabouts) in a similar type of match, and should continue to build on their fine showing last season. Well done Richie, you did a good job there. I've always had a soft spot for Flyers, hopefully now the exodus to Slough has stopped they can improve to be a worthy London #3, before Romford Raiders set the puck sliding in John Bull country.

Oh well, I've had a lot to say this week, I should apologise for the programme being a little under-par this time round, but I've just picked up a heavy cold and was at Telford last night, Saturday being my main production day after Sunday. (If you see what I mean!)

See you all here next Saturday for the visit of that other team in London, the Twickenham tornadoes, Richmond Flyers.

Towards a greater Lee Valley,

Mike Grafton.

THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THIS PROGRAMME ARE NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF LEE VALLEY REGIONAL PARK AUTHORITY OR THE LIONS.

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