

Pershore Hockey Club Match Reports

Saturday 5 December 2009

Pershore 3 - 2 Barlaston

Pershore knew that a win was vital from this BodyKraft West Midlands Division 2 game to keep any hopes of promotion alive. The home side began the game very strongly with some good link up play down the right hand flank between Joe Taylor, Toby Whiting and Paul Grummit, with the latter winning a short corner that was dispatched clinically by Whiting. Pershore then took control of the game and the ball but lacked a little patience from previous weeks and the final ball was to be forced to create as many chances as they should have. Despite this, the visiting keeper was having a superb time mopping up chances from Steve Ridsdale and Jamie Hughes when the opposing defence had been breached. Barlaston then equalised against the run of play as a long aerial ball was again not dealt with by Pershore and with Pershore's defence waiting for an umpire's whistle the ball was struck on goal, but kept out by the leg of Russell Scudamore on the line and John Sharratt in the Pershore goal was unable to stop the resulting flick. Pershore however re-grouped and whereas some of their basic qualities were not as good as they could have been, they were able to score an excellent goal through Jamie Hughes following some nice interplay with Whiting. The second half was an all together scrappier affair with Pershore main pivots Rushton and Rushin unable to find their normal accuracy in passing, but tireless defensive work by Hindle, Powell and Scudamore continued to keep the opposition out. With time running out in the game Pershore extended their lead to 2 through some great work on the left flank involving Powell and Ridsdale, who found Whiting marauding forward to reverse sweep the ball from the top of the area at full speed past an advancing goalkeeper. The final 10 minutes of the game some of the away side enjoy some of their best hockey, but a well disciplined Pershore side managed to repel them until the closing moments, when Rushton once again miss-hit a 16 to an opposing player, this time however the ball was switched into the centre where Scudamore unfortunately mis-controlled the ball into the opposing skippers path. Pershore were able to close the game out without further incident and travel to Yardley next Saturday before the mid-season break.

Pershore Ladies 1 – Bournville Ladies II 4

Pershore Ladies travelled to Birmingham for their last league game before the Christmas break. The girls started well with the defence of Sam Witheford, Kate Green, Amanda Barnes and Gemma soaking up the pressure that came from the high flying Bournville side. There were a few breaks from the Pershore girls, however none of these could penetrate the Bournville defensive line. Bournville broke the deadlock with a scrappy goal which had been saved by keeper Lisa Hill but not cleared by the defence. This left the Pershore girls feeling a little lost in the midfield and within 10 minutes Bournville had gone 2-0 up as a well worked short corner rebound found the back of the goal. After half time Pershore came out and started playing with the conviction that had got them to 3rd in the league table. Much better passing in the midfield from Nicki and Sue Sheppard, Emma Gardner, Ruth Darling and Holly Barnes saw more pressure than Bournville had seen all game and a break from Gardner should have seen the plums get one back. However, it was once again Bournville who took their chance with another scrappy goal. Pershore never gave up though and a free hit saw Sue Sheppard take the ball and put in a stunning cross to Gardner who slammed it past the keeper. This rallied the girls even more and despite numerous attacks they were unable to

convert their chances. Mary Small, Zoe Nicholson and Jess making some fantastic runs up front. In the last 5 minutes Bournville put more pressure on the Pershore defence and despite some fantastic goal line clearances from most of the defenders, they finished off the game with another short corner goal.

This was a disappointing result for Pershore but the second half performance was one of their best this season. They play a friendly against Worcester 3rds away this weekend – their last game before Christmas.

Market Drayton II 0 – 3 Pershore II

A fine team performance by Pershore's second string ensured a return to winning ways. After a long journey up to Keele university, Pershore started strongly with Lea Hawkes initiating many attacking moves. Market Drayton were under increasing pressure, and following a mazy dribble by Steve Quantrell, Pershore took the lead, following a fine reverse stick finish by Graham Handley. Playing with increased confidence, a second soon followed as Mark Passmore scored a fine solo goal. Pershore's only setback was Ed Barker taking a nasty blow in the mouth, forcing him off for medical treatment, just before half time.

The opening minutes in the second half were always going to be critical. Market Drayton had to score to get back into the game, and the extra man advantage spurred them on to attack with ferocity. Pershore's defence were however resolute, and some great tackling by Gary Stevenson and Scott Attwood, ensured that Lee Wickersham had a quiet day in goal. Incredibly, Pershore looked the more likely to score, whilst playing with 10. Andy Wright was tireless in his sweeper role, and pushed forwards to help the midfield whenever possible. After missing several short corner opportunities to extend the score, Harry Jones scored with an exquisite finish to cap off a fine debut.

With Market Drayton becoming increasingly frustrated, the game turned a little scrappy. However Pershore remained rock solid as both Ed Barker returned to the pitch, and Luke Dalley proving to be a constant menace, marauding forwards from right back. The final whistle went with Pershore the worthy winners. They face a very tricky match against fellow high flyers Bloxwich at the weekend.

Walsall III 5 - 1 Pershore III

Pershore travelled to Walsall with a depleted squad of 9 and eventually the extra numbers of Walsall told. Pershore started well and showed that with a full team they would have dominated. Pershore scored first with a breakaway goal, Julian Heath put Craig Johnson through who drew the keeper and squared to Mike Doust who slotted the ball home. This may have been a mistake and Walsall launched attack after attack, from one of these attacks they were able to score a "Thierry Henry" goal. With the umpires unsighted both sets of players stopped when the ball appeared to go over the back line but as there was no whistle Walsall played on and were able to score. One or two Pershore players were unhappy and comments were made to the player that resulted in Pershore going down to 8 men for 10 minutes. In this one incident the game swung heavily in Walsall's favour, the extra effort needed by Pershore's 8 resulted in tiredness in the last 10 minutes of the game. Just before half time Walsall eventually used their numerical advantage to score a 2nd, despite some heroic defending by Tommy Handley. After half time Pershore valiantly tried to get back into the game with George Darling and Karl Lawson working hard to create a number of half chances. But it was to no avail when Walsall got a third despite the best efforts of debutant

goalkeeper Richard Darling. Another incident again changed the game in Walsall's favour after one of their players reacted violently to an innocuous tackle, the Pershore player didn't back away and this resulted in a yellow for both players. Pershore played with 8 for the rest of the game and this allowed Walsall to score 2 more goals.

This was a great effort by the Pershore team to fulfil this fixture with only 3 of the team playing for more than this one season, hopefully next week a full team can bring Pershore back to winning ways.