

# Pershore Hockey Club Match Reports

## Saturday 6 February 2010

## Sunday 7 February 2010

### SATURDAY

#### **Kingswinford 3 – 3 Pershore**

This Bodykraft West Midlands 2 division game must have been one of the highest standard games of hockey the division has seen, with both sides demonstrating excellent qualities if not contrasting styles. Kingswinford began the game at a frenetic pace using their hugely skilful forwards to lay siege on the Pershore goal, only the excellence of John Sharratt in the Pershore goal kept the home side at bay. Against the run of play Pershore opened the scoring through Toby Whiting, who combined with Paul Grummit to force a defensive mistake, and to finished coolly past an on-rushing goal keeper. Kingswinford levelled the scores up soon after with a super reverse stick strike. The rest of the first half was played out with Pershore dominating possession keeping up a high tempo passing style, but defending resolutely against several aerial balls which was Kingswinford's main threat.

The second half continued in the same fashion with Russell Scudamore, Dave Hindle and Jamie Hughes in the Pershore defence performing heroically, with special mention to a fine penalty flick save by Sharratt. Kingswinford went ahead following a barrage of attacks, however this only saw Pershore increase their resolve and workrate. Pershore's equalizer came from skipper Gareth Rushton following a clever short corner drill. With 4 minutes to play Pershore produced the move of the match, a strong tackle and run by Scudamore saw the ball move right then left at great pace through Rob Handley, Whiting and Pete Powell, with Steve Ridsdale through on the keeper squared to ball for Grummit to tap in at the far post. A jubilant Pershore should have waited three more minutes to celebrate, but from the pushback a Kingswinford forward dribbled through almost the entire team to level the match.

It was a great game and probably a fair result between the league's promotion favourites. Pershore host Rugeley next week, looking to address a defeat they sustained away to the visitors earlier in the season.

#### **Harborne Ladies IV 3 - Pershore Ladies 1**

Pershore had an early start this week away at Harborne in Birmingham. It was a slow start for the Plums and the defence of Kate and Jo Clark, Sam Witheford, Amanda Barnes and Kate Green took a battering early on. They defended well until a severe deflection off a Pershore stick saw the ball pass Keeper Lisa Hill to give Harborne the lead. For the rest of the half there were only a few attacking opportunities for Pershore who were always one step behind the Harborne players. The second half saw Pershore wake up! A mazy run through the Harborne defence saw Emma Gardner slip a cross through to the far post where Zoe Nicholson slipped the ball past the keeper early on in the second half. This gave Pershore a renewed energy and the passing in Midfield between Gardner, Sue Sheppard, Nicki Sheppard and Hollie Wharton saw Pershore have a lot more pressure than in the first half. Runs from Kat Clasen, Lisa Griffiths, Mary Small and Zoe Nicholson kept the Harborne defence alert however, it was to be Harborne that scored the next goal, albeit dubious as it hit a Harborne foot in the process.

With 15 minutes to go Pershore pressed hard and the work rate was fantastic. End to end hockey saw both teams looking for another goal. It was Harborne that took that chance and a slick cross was hammered in from the top of the D. Pershore came away disappointed and hope to break their disappointing league form with a win against Droitwich at home this week.

#### **Stafford II 6 - 1 Pershore II**

A strong second team traveled up to high flying Stafford seeking revenge for their sound beating earlier on in the season. The game started in frenetic fashion with both sides trying to take control in midfield. Stafford's play was far more composed with Pershore's passing lacking pace and accuracy. A swift attack by Stafford and a snap shot by the leagues highest scorer broke the deadlock. Pershore simply didn't recover from this setback and their game fell apart as confidence dropped. James Massingham and Andy Wright toiled in midfield trying to regain some composure, although they simply were outgunned by Staffords attacking formation. With waves of attacks on Pershores goal, the defensive trio of Gary Stevenson, Scott Attwood and Mike Handley were pushed to the limits. Something had to give, and Stafford soon scored a second, past the hapless Wickersham in goal. Things went from bad to worse as Stafford scored their third just before the half time break.

With the game pretty much over, Pershore were playing for pride in the second half. They came out strongly out of the blocks and put Stafford under increasingly pressure. The continuing menace of Steve Quantrell finally gave Pershore their just reward. A shot from Ali Sanderson was well smothered by Staffords keeper, although Liam Ridings coolly slotted away the rebound. A comeback was on the cards briefly, as Stafford looked rattled from the Pershore's ferocious start to the half. As Pershore desperately pushed forwards, they were always open the counter attack. The killer blows arrived when Lea Hawkes was cruelly yellow carded for a deliberate kick, as well as Mark Passmore struggling with an injury. The one man advantage was just too much for Pershore, as Stafford clinically scored three more goals before end of the game.

In the end, they were beaten by a largely superior team. However Pershore can take heart from their spirited fight back in the second half.

#### **Pershore III 0 - 3 Bloxwich III**

In Pershore's worst performance of the season there were few bright spots. Pershore started well and dominated the first half with the Pershore keeper not touching the ball. Chances came and went for Graham Handley, Luke Dalley and Pershore couldn't create anything from short corners. Even when they had a penalty flick Phil Taylor was unable to convert. The second half was a different affair with Bloxwich dominant despite the excellent efforts of Tommy Handley and Pete Moreby Pershore couldn't keep Bloxwich at bay. The only bright sparks were the return to hockey of the Liam Burkenshaw and the excellent endeavour of Karl Lawson.

Sunday PTO

## **SUNDAY**

### **Pershore II 5 - 1 Kidderminster II**

Pershore soon got back to winning ways after a fine team performance for this re-arranged fixture on Sunday. Although Pershore started very strongly, it was Kidderminster who scored the first goal, when a shot from their winger squeezed between the post and keeper Wickershams foot.

Undeterred by this setback, Pershore stormed forwards. Midfield maestro Toby Whiting went on a mazy run, rounding 3 defenders before unselfishly setting up Ali Sanderson to unleash a thunderbolt shot into the top corner. Kidderminster were stunned – their lead lasted less than a couple of minutes. Pershore continued to dominate as James Massingham and Vince Crowley were winning all the 50:50 tackles in midfield. With wave after wave of attack on Kidderminsters goal, something had to give, and Pershore soon took the lead as Russell Scudamore hit a precision shot into the corner of the net.

Half time arrived with Pershore in control of the game. Buoyed by a superb defensive display by Mike Handley and Scott Attwood, Pershore continued to press in the second half. Russell Scudamore scored his second of the game, before Toby Whiting made the game safe. Pershore then relaxed, and played some lovely flowing hockey. With Andy Wright and Luke Dalley both pushing forwards from defense, Kidderminster were under constant pressure. Mark Passmore was unlucky not to score with two shots just whizzing past the post, although the icing on the cake was when Steve Quantrell finished in style, following great work by man of the match Scudamore.

All in all, this was a great team performance by Pershore. They look forward to continuing this form against Kynoch at the weekend.

### **Kingswinford III 0 - 4 Pershore III**

In a marked contrast to the previous day Pershore played much more as a team on this rearranged fixture. All be it against a inexperienced Kingswinford side 10 man Pershore dominated possession throughout. The first half was rather a scrappy affair with Pershore struggling to convert there dominance into clear goal scoring opportunities despite the best efforts of Craig Johnson and Jon Cranton up front. The goal eventually came when Pershore won a short corner, Cranton injected to Phil Taylor who expertly flicked the ball home.

In the second half Pershore were much more fluid with there superior experience and fitness showing, with Gavin Pugh pulling the strings wave after wave of attack were launched. Julian Heath and Ash Griffin were able to find space and the second goal came when the latter combined with a marauding Karl Lawson who drove into the D to push the ball into the bottom corner. The third soon followed when Pugh made a darting run to square to John Sharratt who struck the ball into the far corner for Cranton to show his goal poaching skills to flick the ball home from close range.

Kingswinford to there credit pushed forward and Pershore were indebted to Pete Moreby and Gary Stevenson making his debut in goal for the clean sheet. Pershore's best goal came after a Kingswinford break, Heath passed to Pugh who fired the ball to Cranton on the half way line, after neat interplay Pugh was able to overlap and square the ball to Ash Griffin on the top of the D who rifled the ball into the bottom corner for the fourth and final goal of the game.