

Leeds Knights vs Solway Sharks 26.12.23

The Morley Glass Leeds Knights welcomed the Solway Sharks back to the Castle for the first time since pre-season and secured a 3-1 victory on Boxing day. The Knights retained the same squad of 19+2 from the previous home game, opting for #31 Sam Gospel in net after securing a shut-out in Hull. The Sharks also travelled with a squad of 19+2 and gave netminder #34 Curtis Warburton the start in-between the pipes.

Leeds quickly tested Warburton in the opening minute after Mac Howlett collected the loose puck in the crease and flicked it towards goal. Solway were handed their first power-play chance of the night at 5:06 when #3 Bailey Perre sat 2 minutes for roughing. The Sharks capitalised at 6:20 with a top-corner strike from #71 Craig Peacock, assisted by #22 John Dunbar and #5 Olivier Arsenau to give them the lead.

However, the Knights fought back and levelled the score to 1-1 just minutes later at 10:10. Captain #12 Kieran Brown claimed his 50th point of the season as he flicked the loose puck backhand past Warburton on the rebound, assisted by Canadian imports #54 Noah McMullin and #37 Matt Barron. Both sides continued to push for a lead heading into the 2nd period and Leeds were the ones to do so. A 2on1 breakaway allowed #9 Jordan Buesa to tap the puck into the goal following a pass across the crease from Brown which tore Warburton out of position.

The Sharks applied pressure early in the 2nd period but the Knights defence prevented them reducing the deficit. Solway's #47 Ross Connolly then sat a 2 minute penalty for tripping to stop a Knight's breakaway at 27:03. Seconds later, #37 Matt Barron fired the puck into the top corner on the PP, assisted by Brown and Neely at 27:39 to increase the scoreline to 3-1. Solway soon turned to the attack, but several stunning saves by Gospel kept the Sharks at bay.

Both teams returned for the final period, with Leeds claiming puck possession from the initial face-off. A huge chance came for the Sharks at 48:05 when #43 Nolan Gardiner found himself alone at point with the puck, but he shot it wide of the net. #51 Struan Tonnar then fancied his chance with a slap-shot from the blue line but Gospel comfortably got a glove to it through traffic. Solway continued to push for their 2nd goal and decided to pull #34 Curtis Warburton after a time-out at 58:04. Leeds managed to clear the puck from their zone and aimed for goal, but they were called for icing. Neither team landed the puck into the net and the final score remained at 3-1 to the Leeds Knights.

The Thermos sponsored MVPs were awarded to forward #37 Matt Barron after his 3-point game and defenceman #10 Liam Stenton claimed the award for the Solway Sharks.

Officials: Emmerson, Miller, Horner, Andrews

STATS -

Leeds Knights: Kieran Brown 1+2, Matt Barron 1+2, Jordan Buesa 1+0, Noah McMullin 0+1, Bow Neely 0+1

Solway Sharks: Craig Peacock 1+0, John Dunbar 0+1, Olivier Arsenau 0+1

Article written by Fleur Tobin