

Leeds Knights v Solway Sharks Match Report 06/10/2024

LEEDS KNIGHTS bounced back from the disappointing start to the latest weekend of their NIHL National campaign by producing a stirring come-from-behind win against Solway Sharks to remain top of the regular season standings.

With just over five minutes remaining on Sunday night at The Castle, it looked like the Knights were on course to lose back-to-back league games for the first time since February 2023.

But veteran centre Matt Haywood came to the fore with two goals to seal a stunning 5-4 win. In an even first period, the Knights - who handed a debut to 16-year-old Leeds Junior Knights centre Edgars Vengis - had fallen behind at 13.33 to a Torran Anderson effort, only for Matthew Barron to continue his early-season goalscoring form when he levelled just 51 seconds later.

Innes Gallacher then got the hosts ahead just after the halfway mark with his second of the season before the game was turned on its head with two Sharks goals in the space of just 12 seconds.

Joe Lynch levelled at 37.25 before John Dunbar stunned the home crowd when he put Solway ahead for a second time.

Thankfully, Oli Endicott was on hand to drag the Knights level at 37.59 to ensure the teams went into the second intermission all-square at 3-3.

But, after the restart, the Knights quickly found themselves chasing the game once again after Nolan Gardiner showed why he is the Sharks' leading goalscorer by putting them ahead again at 42.59.

That is how it stayed until the 55th minute when Haywood once again came to his team's rescue, hauling them level before helping them make the most of a holding the stick call on The Sharks' Liam Stenton, to slam home a power play winner at 57.20.

It made for a positive end to the weekend for the Knights and their fans, the opposite of how they were feeling after the previous day's trip to Berkshire Bees.

Mac Howlett broke the deadlock with the only goal of the first period at 19.11 before a second period dominated by penalties not surprisingly failed to produce any goals.

The game turned at 43.33, however, when Bees' player-coach Dominik Gabaj equalised before the Knights' task was made even harder just under 12 minutes later when Stuart Mogg put the home team ahead.

Despite late pressure, the Knights couldn't find a way past Max Wright in the Bees net for a second time and had to head home without anything to show for their efforts.