

Leeds Knights v Hull Seahawks Match Report 12/10/2024

IT WAS a case of 'honours even' after a pulsating Yorkshire derby double-header weekend between your Morley Glass Leeds Knights and Hull Seahawks.

First blood went to the Knights when they won 6-3 at a sold-out 'Castle' on Saturday night, Noah McMullin leading the way with two goals.

And it was too close to call on Sunday night in the return encounter at Hull Ice Arena, the teams eventually only separated by a late power play strike from Lee Bonner in a 2-1 defeat for the Knights.

Despite the defeat, the Knights remain top of the NIHL National standings on Monday morning, tied on points with Milton Keynes Lightning and Romford Raiders, who have both played one game less, with Hull a point further back in fourth place.

On Saturday and against the run of play, the Seahawks went ahead on the power play at 6.23 through Owen Sobchak.

But, just over four minutes later, the Knights were level when Krisjanis Fugalis fired through traffic from the blue line and past an unsuspected Jordan McLoughlin to post his first-ever goal for the club after joining during the summer.

It was Leeds who struck next at 24.45, Bow Neely, Matt Haywood and Matt Bissonnette working the puck well before it eventually fell to McMullin, who side-stepped his man before back-handing past McLoughlin.

But the joy of the home crowd was short-lived when Jason Hewitt levelled from close-range just 24 seconds later.

With just two minutes remaining, it looked like it would stay level going into the third. But Innes Gallacher had other ideas. Ethan Hehir won a foot race to the puck in the Hull zone before setting up Gallacher to fire past McLoughlin and into the roof of the net from the left circle.

It got even better for the Knights just 77 seconds later when Matt Bissonnette set up Matt Barron perfectly to make it 4-2 with a piledriver on the power play.

The third period was only 63 seconds old when Hull made it a one-goal game through Johnny Corneil but the Knights were quick to respond when McMullin bagged his second of the night, firing through traffic to make it 5-3 at 43.52.

Hull pushed hard at the other end and Sam Gospel had to make a number of key saves, but the killer blow came in the 55th minute when Bissonnette skilfully worked

space for himself in the right circle and fired into McLoughlin's top right-hand corner to complete a deserved 6-3 win.

On Sunday in Hull, the Seahawks were understandably out for revenge, but both sides were clearly up for the fight, with rival goalies Sam Gospel and Dmitri Zimozdra both proving solid in the first 20 minutes.

The breakthrough, when it came, was early in the second period, Hewitt setting up Lee Bonner at the top of the right circle from where he unleashed an unstoppable shot past Gospel with 23.08 on the clock.

But grade A scoring chances were at more of a premium compared to the previous night and it took until the closing moments of the second before the Knights were able to draw level.

A boarding call on Emil Svec gave the Knights their fourth power play opportunity of the game and, this time, they made it count, Mac Howlett - off a feed from Bissonnette - firing through traffic from the top of the right circle to draw his team level at 39.32.

There was little to choose between the two teams in another feisty encounter, but it was another special teams moment that was to prove crucial, Bonner tipping in from in front off Emil Svec at 55.12 while Jordan Griffin was in the box on a cross-checking call.

The Knights pushed hard for a second equaliser but could not find a way past the impressive Zimozdra, meaning an exciting weekend ended all-square in terms of Yorkshire bragging rights.