

RAF FA Ladies vs Army Women played at The Aldershot Military Stadium



The opening match of the 2019 Inter-Service fixtures saw the RAF Ladies take on the Army Women at the Aldershot Military Stadium. With the weather conditions ideal for football with minimal wind both teams prepared to get off to a good start.

The Army started the brighter with good pressure on the ball and after only 2 minutes squeezed away the first attempt on goal following a good run and pull back from the right corner to the edge of the box. The onrushing attacker got their shot away but it was wide with Davies in the RAF goal looking totally unfazed.

It would be long before the Army did take the lead. Wright in the Army midfield played a ball forward which was bobbling across the surface, despite intercepting it the clearance looped to Dixon who hit a speculative but impressive first-time effort from 30 yards out which looped over Davies to make it 1-0 to the Army.



This stirred the RAF into action, with McIntosh chasing back to recover the ball 40 yards from the Army goal, she turned and started to run at the Army defence but was fouled to give the RAF a free kick 35 yards out. A decent ball was delivered into the box but it evaded everyone. The officials were called into action on 21 mins after Ash Mackenzie did a crunching tackle on her opponent, unfortunately for her it was slightly mistimed but showed

the Ladies were really up for the fight as they tried to address the deficit.

With the RAF defence stopping a number of attacks and recycling the ball forward quickly the RAF were starting to get on top. Zara McIntosh went on another good run down the left wing and seeing the Army keeper out of her goal, tried to lob her. As the ball sailed over the keeper's head, the crowd were already on their feet but the ball went just wide of the far post and the Army escaped.

The Army soon reminded the RAF that they were not here to play for a 1-0. A quick attack saw them work the ball deep into the RAF half, the Army striker clipped the ball past her but Rachel Rutherford cleared off the line. The RAF responded again with McIntosh again asking questions but her surging run through the middle was stopped when the Army keeper was quickly out to clear.

On 43 minutes the RAF finally got their just reward. Following a foul on the edge of the box on Steph Lee as she looked to shoot after McIntosh had played her in. Up stepped Rachel Griffiths to take charge of the free kick. She placed the ball just inside the 'D' of the box, calmly walked back to her starting position, then launched a strong right foot shot goal bound. With a little bit of help from a deflection it went into the bottom right corner to make it 1-1 just before half time.



Keeping momentum going the RAF started the 2nd half brightly winning a corner after a couple of minutes but the ball into the box was cleared for another corner which came to nothing. On 48 minutes the first chance of the half went just wide of the Army goal with the Army keeper looking concerned.

The Army again reacted to the RAF pressure with a fast counter attack, with the ball lifted over Davies who had closed down the angle it looked like a sucker punch for the RAF but Rachel Griffiths had done a lung busting run to get back and cleared it off the line at full stretch. As the match progressed the RAF pressure also grew. With several corners and free kick around the box. On 68 mins Griffith had another shot on target but it was cleared straight to Rachel Rutherford who shot just wide.

Minutes later Griffiths was unlucky not to double her tally. Another free kick driven towards the bottom corner but this time the Army keeper pushed it around the post at full stretch. The RAF were still having to be alive to the threat on the break and after a foul on the left touchline, the Army delivered a great ball into the box. This was met by a towering header from Rachael Howes who took control of the situation and cleared the lines.



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With time running out and the RAF failing to capitalise on the number of corners they were winning it was still surprising to see the RAF take a short corner in added time when it was screaming out to get the ball into the box. This proved to be the last action in the match. With a point on the board the RAF can be rightly proud of their strong performance in all areas of the pitch. **Final score 1-1.**



Squad

Sgt Nicola Davies
SAC Rachael Howes
SAC Nicola Symons
SAC Rachel Rutherford
Cpl Cat Beaver
Cpl Rachel Griffiths
Cpl Ashleigh MacKenzie
Cpl Lauren Impey
Sgt Zara McIntosh
SAC Steph Lee
SAC Samantha Wylie
SAC Emma Hollingsworth
SAC Keri Haywood
SAC Lauren Cassin
SAC Lauren Welsh
SAC Leanne Davison
Fg Off Natasha Kenny
SAC Laura Parsons

Match Report – Sqn Ldr Garf Parker – Director of Comms
Photographs – Mr John Elliott and Sqn Ldr Garf Parker



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