

RAF LRT Team Match Report



14 March 2018

RAF LRT – Army Women 1 - 2

On a dry but cool afternoon, the LRT kicked off their Inter-Services campaign at a hastily rearranged venue due to concerns raised about playing two matches on the Shrewsbury Town FC pitch following prolonged bad weather. Despite the late change of venue, the settings for the match were impressive with the RAF thankful to the New Saints FC, Oswestry for allowing the RAF to use the Park Hall Stadium. The 4G pitch meant that conditions were perfect for football to be played.

The RAF took a little time to settle into the game with the initial exchanges favouring the Army. However, after 15 mins, once they had settled into the surroundings and got used to the pitch, they started to dominate play and ask lots of questions of the Army team.

On 17 mins, the first clear cut chance arose following an over hit pass from the RAF. Horsley in the Army goal miss hit her clearance straight to Zara McIntosh, who played in strike partner Welsh. She turned and shot goal wards but her effort was blocked by a combination of defenders and the Army keeper seeing the ball diverted unexpectedly to Sam Wiley on the left-hand side of the



box. With a strong first touch, she saw the ball slightly get away from here and under pressure and with the goal line approaching, she managed to get her shot away but saw her effort hit the base of the post and fly across the goal. McIntosh and Welsh were stretching the Army defence with their running but the Army defenders were covering well, snuffing out the danger and blocking shots.

The Army tried to respond to the pressure with Olivia Dixon controlling the ball on the edge of the RAF box, turning and striking towards goal but the effort went wide with Keeper Nicky Davies watching it all the way.



With 24 mins played, an injury to Lauren Welsh forced the first substitution of the match with Robyn Stewart coming on to replace her. On 25 mins the RAF were awarded a free kick 25 yards out. With a couple of players over the ball, it was Rachel Rutherford who stepped up and hit a brilliant free over the wall towards the top left corner of the goal, with the Army keeper truly beaten it looked like the deadlock would be broken but unfortunately the crossbar came to the Army's rescue and the effort came back out.

Stewart broke free after a great first-time touch by Steph Lee but as she went to shot, she was tackled by Kris Wright who read the danger well and cleared for a corner. Another great delivery into the box from Rachel Rutherford was met by a firm header from Kaye Widdicombe but she couldn't keep it on target and her effort went just wide. Both sides were fully committed in the tackle and this was demonstrated by a bone crunching, perfectly timed tackle by Rachel Rutherford on Jemma Dinning. The impact saw the Army player injured and needing to go off. She was replaced by Mica Taylor.

On 38 mins Zara Macintosh beat the Army keeper, only for her effort to also hit the post. Stewart followed up but her attempt was blocked and then smothered by the Army keeper. The final chance of the half saw Nic Symons played in after decent interplay and a great advantage by the officials, but her shot went high and wide. Having taken control of the first half they left scratching their heads as to how they had not seen any reward but it was all still to play for with 45 mins left.

Half time – RAF LRT 0 – 0 Army Women.

After the break, it was obvious that the Army had been energised by their management team and they came out with a greater intensity. On 55 mins the Army open the scoring, making the RAF pay for the missed chances in the first half with Olivia Dixon slotting home the opening goal soon after the restart when she received the ball on the edge of the box and used the outside of her boot to



slide the ball under an advancing Nicky Davies in the RAF goal. More changes were made as both sides looked to freshen up things. Hayley Sloan went off and was replaced by Weston for the Army and Kaye Widdicombe was replaced due to injury by Rachel Dean for the RAF.

Fired up by falling behind, the RAF showed good character and pressed to get back in the match. On 72 mins, they levelled with a deserved equaliser, following great work down the left and a pinpoint curled pass from Robyn Stewart into the box for Zara McIntosh to side foot her



effort home, slipping the ball under Jess Horsley to level it.

Stewart then chanced her arm with a 35-yard speculative shot on the breakdown, with the Army keeper out of her goal it was a great idea but her effort went wide. The Army responded again to the pressure and Olivia Dixon drove into the box but her effort was well blocked by Rutherford and the follow-on shot was fired well wide.

The match looked like it was heading for a draw which would have meant the Army would need to wait until the RAF had played the RN to see who would win the Inter-Services but with five minutes left, the Army were awarded a free kick just inside the RAF half.

Zoe Stewart hit speculative punt into the box from at least 50 yards out and her effort bounced awkwardly in the box with players stretching to add a touch with Shannon Weston the closest to the ball, it is difficult to say whether she touched the goal bound effort or not but the end result was the ball unfortunately eluding RAF goalkeeper Nicky Davies to nestle in the bottom corner.

To concede so late was harsh on the RAF side but the failure to kill the game off in the first half made this defeat even more difficult for the players and staff to take.

With the match nearing the end the Army replaced Dixon with Shannon Bradley and another injury saw Stewart withdrawn and Millie Quinn-Downing come on for the RAF.

With the Army having already beaten the RN (2-1), this victory meant they would win back the Inter-Services Williamson Trophy from the RAF as well as the Chatterton Trophy for winning this fixture and both trophies were awarded by AVM James.



Final score RAF LRT 1 – 2 Army Women.

The RAF play their second Inter-Services match on 20 Mar at HMS Temeraire, Portsmouth against the Royal Navy. Kick 1900.

RAF Squad:

Nicky Davies	RAF Waddington
Nicola Symons	RAF Scampton
Kaye Widdicombe	RAF Benson
Rachel Howes	RAF Coningsby
Rachel Rutherford	RAF Brize Norton
Ash McKenzie	FDTC Crickhowell
Samantha Wylie	RAF Odiham
Catherine Beaver (Captain)	RAF High Wycombe
Stephanie Lee	RAF Waddington
Zara McIntosh	RAF Benson
Lauren Welsh	RAF Benson

Subs

Jade Brown	RAF Waddington
Robyn Stewart	JHFS Aldergrove
Chantelle Lovett	RAF Valley
Mollie Lambert	RAF Northolt
Rachel Dean	RAF Wyton
Millie Quinn-Downing	RAF Brize Norton
Lauren Cassin	RAF Coningsby

Scorers

Cpl Zara McIntosh

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