

Letchworth v Middlesbrough - Honours even.

The second match in the back to back weekend of Premier league games saw Letchworth Roller Hockey Club host Middlesbrough. It was always going to be a tough game, with Middlesbrough currently 2nd in the league, 3 places above Letchworth and therefore, surely the favourites.

The play was intense and fast paced from the first second to the last, with the visitors first to gain advantage with a goal in the 4th minute. They followed up with a second less than 3 minutes later to assert their dominance of play. However, the hosts were not about to give up, and pulled one back through Ricky Jupp in the 14th minute, only for Middlesbrough to strike straight back. James Taylor restored some pride for the hosts with only seconds to go before half time, taking the score to 2 – 3 at the break.

The second half, if anything, was even more fiercely contested, with the home side striking goal first through Craig Gibson, only for the visitors to hit back immediately. The visitors put the game further out of reach with another goal 90 seconds later, giving them a 2 goal lead. They were unable to take advantage of 2 minutes power play when LRHC had a player blue carded, and keeper Ben Howes made repeated saves to keep the hosts in with a chance. Letchworth were down, but not out, and Ricky Jupp hit home in the 7th minute to narrow the gap. It was another full 10 minutes before Middlesbrough scored again, and with 8 minutes of play left, and a 2 goal lead, they looked likely winners. It was James Taylor who rescued the game for the hosts with 2 blistering goals in the final minutes to give him a hat-trick and level the score. It looked like he might even snatch a winner in the dying 3 seconds, only to be denied by the keeper. Final score: 6-6.

Special mention must be given to Ricky Jupp, who not only scored twice, but went back on after not one, but 2 injuries (one split lip and one cut to the back of the head) – last seen heading to casualty for stitches once the game had finished!

Team: D Milne (GK), C Gibson, J Veasey, C Westrop, N Allen (VC), A Allen (C), C Amaral, B Howes (GK), R Jupp, J Taylor.