

Aldershot Town vs. Reading Town
Southern Region Women's Football League Premier Division
9 October 2011

SUPER SMITH SEALS SHOTS WIN

Two goals from vice-captain Di Smith, including a spectacular 35-yard free kick earned Aldershot Town Ladies their 3rd-consecutive home win, as Matt Leary reports.

Ryan Salmon made one change from the starting line-up that beat Wycombe Wanderers the previous week, with Amy Lawrence starting in favour of Laura Wallman. Lauren Carnell returned to the bench from injury, alongside 'keeper Lesley Hubbard. Amy Hubbert continues her recovery from ankle ligament damage, whilst Amber Marsh and Laura Funnell were the only other absentees aside from a full-strength Shots side.

In the first half, the Shots were simply unable to breach the Reading defence, and on several occasions were lucky not go behind, thanks to a couple of offside flags from Matt Leary, fouls by Reading themselves inside the box, although the majority of the Shots defensive fortune was down to the hard graft being put in by Holly Gayler down the left hand side and good goalkeeping from Callie Messingham.

On 34 minutes, clearly suffering from her knee injury sustained last week, Amy Lawrence was replaced by Laura Wallman up front. The Shots were then given a clear warning minutes later, as a shot from a Reading striker went over the Shots defence and Messingham – only to clip the upright and for Smith to hook the ball clear.

On 40 minutes, Nikki Moore had the Shots best chance of the match, when a wicked shot was fired from the right hand side of the edge of the box towards the opposite corner of the net, and the Reading keeper produced a magnificent finger-tip save, which was greeted by warm applause from both sets of supporters, as once again both the Shots and their opponents had brought respectable support to Farnborough Gate.

HT: Aldershot Town 0 Reading Town 0

At half-time, Naph Williams was replaced by Lauren Carnell. Whatever was said in the confines of the Shots dressing room at the interval did the trick, as within ten minutes of the re-start, the Shots had the lead.

GOAL FLASH: Shots 1-0 (Jade Ferguson 55')

Jade Ferguson was able to beat the offside trap and ran down the right wing, where she crossed back for Laura Wallman to hammer the ball home. On the basis of the Shots second half performance it was a deserved lead.

GOAL FLASH: Shots 2-0 (Di Smith 59')

Four minutes later that lead was doubled, as a powerful throw-in from Caz Shephard found its way to Wallman, who passed the ball back to the midfielder. Shephard then crossed the ball over the area where it found Di Smith, who only required one touch before firing home to make it 2-0.

GOAL FLASH: Shots 3-0 (Di Smith 66')

After Reading conceded a foul on 66 minutes, Di Smith then rolled back the years as her free-kick from the touchline, some 35 yards out managed to elude everyone and end up in the back of the net. Whether intended as a cross or otherwise, it was one of the best so far seen this season from the Shots.

On 79 minutes, Reading finally and deservedly got on the score sheet, as a cleverly worked ball was eventually hooked into the top corner of Messingham's net. However this was the least of Shots' concerns, as Messingham had collided with the post when trying to save the shot, and after a couple of minutes of attention from Becky Miler, she was able to continue.

In the final minute of normal time there was drama, as Jade Ferguson committed a foul on a Reading player in front of the two technical areas. Immediately the Reading player got up and angrily confronted the young striker, and it required the immediate intervention of referee Steve Lynch (who up until this point had had a quiet game), with a yellow card issued to Ferguson for what was deemed a reckless tackle. The Reading player was unable to continue, and worse still required ambulance treatment after the match.


The Shots could have had at least one penalty in stoppage time, as Caz Shephard was spectacularly tackled inside the area by the Reading keeper and there were muffled shouts for a second for the exact same thing late on.

However after six exhaustive minutes of added time, Lynch blew for full time after an outstanding second-half performance from the Shots, but the action hadn't finished there.

The referee and assistant Matt Leary were surrounded by the Reading team and manager, demanding why Ferguson wasn't sent off, claiming she no intention to go for the ball. However the video replay clearly backed the Farnborough official in his decision to caution rather than dismiss.

FT: Aldershot Town 3 Reading Town 1

Squad

1. Callie Messingham
3. Holly Gayler
4. Di Smith
5. Naph Williams (14. Lauren Camell 46')
6. Sian Houghton
7. Emma North
10. Caz Shephard
11. Jade Ferguson 
15. Katie Salmon
16. Nikki Moore
17. Amy Lawrence (12. Laura Wallman 34')

Unused Subs

40. Lesley Hubbard (GK)

Manager's Player of the Match: Holly Gayler

"A game of two halves, in which for the first 45 minutes we struggled to get going and should probably have gone in at the break a goal down, but after some encouragement at half time we came out and dominated the whole of the second half, scoring three goals in fairly quick succession and played much better securing a deserved three points.

*That's now three wins in a row and we look forward to the coming fixtures, especially next week's FA Cup game against Southampton Women." – **Manager Ryan Salmon***