

Aldershot Town vs. Southampton Women
Southern Region Women's Football League Premier Division
4 December 2011

SHOTS SALVAGE POINT AGAINST SOUTHAMPTON

Laura Wallman salvaged a point for the Shots in a pulsating match which saw six goals on an overcast and cold Sunday afternoon.

The Shots came into the match aiming for revenge over Southampton after being dumped out of the FA Cup by the South Coast side in October. Ryan Salmon made two changes to the side that drew at Maidenhead seven days ago, with Hannah Bramhall replaced by Katie Salmon, and Amy Lawrence dropping to the bench in favour of namesake Hubbort.

GOAL FLASH: Shots 0-1 – 4 minutes

The Shots were caught napping in the opening five minutes, when Southampton took an early lead. A free kick from the half way line found the right winger, who beat Holly Gayler before crossing for a Southampton striker to tap in at the far post. However if anything this spurred the Shots on, as Emma North, Jade Ferguson, Caz Shephard and Nikki Moore all went close, as Amy Hubbort commanded the right wing and was able to put a series of passes and crosses into her team mates. Ferguson's work rate was especially noticeable, as her determination was equally match with her intelligence by timing her runs and beating the offside trap on every occasion – something she has often struggled with this season.

GOAL FLASH: Shots 1-1 (Jade Ferguson 36')

Eventually the pressure tolled and the Shots levelled, as an intricate sequence of one-two passes between North, Moore and Ferguson found the latter with time to fire past the keeper.

GOAL FLASH: Shots 1-2 – 39 minutes

However all of the Shots efforts were nullified 3 minutes later, as a goal kick from Lesley Hubbard was cleared up to Sian Houghton. The ball deflected off the midfielder into opposition possession, where a Southampton striker was able to hold off the attentions of Holly Gayler and slot past Hubbard.

HT: Aldershot Town 1 Southampton 2

At half time, Ryan Salmon made his first substitution, as he replaced Katie Salmon with Amy Lawrence with a more attack-minded formation in mind.

GOAL FLASH: Shots 1-3 – 66 minutes

The visitors doubled their lead midway through the first half, as a corner was half cleared by Hubbort, and the ball was put back into the right winger again, who crossed ball to the far post for a Southampton player to nod home in a carbon-copy of their first goal, and it seemed that Southampton were in full control of the match at this point.

Salmon made his final change, bringing off a limping Jade Ferguson and putting in poacher Laura Wallman.

GOAL FLASH: Shots 2-3 – (Amy Lawrence 75')

Lawrence found herself in possession on the edge of the penalty box. She powered into the penalty area and unleashed a ferocious shot past the keeper to give the Shots hope with 15 minutes to play.

GOAL FLASH: Shots 3-3 – (Laura Wallman 89')

With barely a minute left of the ninety, a goalmouth scramble saw firstly Amy Hubbort's and then Nikki Moore's efforts blocked by the keeper, but she couldn't keep out Wallman's shot which was bundled over the line for the equaliser. With five minutes of stoppage time to be played, the Shots suddenly found themselves with the belief of pulling off a remarkable comeback and bagging all three points, as they bombarded the Southampton penalty area with several corners, but ultimately just couldn't get that crucial touch to knock the ball over the line.

Tempers began to rise in the final minute, as Houghton saw yellow for dissent after she was penalised for a slight handball, and then a Southampton player was reprimanded by referee Simon Jelf for a bit of verbal towards assistant Matt Leary – with North defending her linesman at the full time whistle, asking the referee why equal punishment wasn't administered, when every player had heard the comment. Mr. Jelf claimed he hadn't heard the comment.

FT: Aldershot Town 3 Southampton Women 3

Squad

- 40. Lesley Hubbard
- 2. Amber Marsh
- 3. Holly Gayler
- 4. Di Smith
- 6. Sian Houghton 
- 7. Emma North
- 10. Caz Shephard
- 11. Jade Ferguson (12. Laura Wallman 73')
- 14. Amy Hubbort
- 15. Nikki Moore
- 16. Katie Salmon (17. Amy Lawrence 46')

Player of the Match: Amy Hubbort

"Full credit to Southampton – they have a very good, strong side. Their keeper pulled off some great saves and their right winger had a lot of pace, and Holly [Gayler] put in some great tackles to prevent her getting the ball in the box. We made some silly mistakes first half and they did what any good side does and capitalise on those mistakes. However, our girls never know when they are beaten, and to come from behind twice and gain a point shows great mental strength. There were a few broken bodies at the end of the game, and I suspect they'll be feeling the effects of today's hard grafting on Monday morning.

The girls have been set a points target for this month and they know it is more than achievable. We next play Launton at home, a side who are very indifferent – we beat them at home last season 7-0, but lost at their place 2-1 at the end of the season."

Matt Leary