

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

FANCY FERGUSON FOOTWORK EARNS SHOTS WIN

A 90th-minute winner from Jade Ferguson after an Emma North penalty sealed three well-earned points for Aldershot Town Ladies on a blustery autumn afternoon at Farnborough Gate, as Matt Leary reports.

Amy Hubbert continues her recovery from ankle ligament damage, although is expected to be back in training in two weeks' time. Lauren Carnell recovers from an injury sustained during last week's FA Cup win over Poole Town. Amber Marsh was the only absentee from an otherwise full-strength Shots side.

Callie Messingham came into the Shots side for her second start of the season, whilst Sian Houghton dropped into defence in a 4-2-3-1 formation and Jade Ferguson dropped back into midfield with Laura Wallman the sole striker.

In the opening twenty minutes of the match, it soon became obvious that the Shots alternate formation wasn't working, as the Wycombe attack breached the defence down the right hand side on several occasions. However that was quickly altered as Ryan Salmon changed to a standard 4-4-2 formation and the change was immediate, as Ferguson was able to pester the Wycombe defence, and along with Nikki Moore had several decent efforts on goal.

On 40 minutes, it looked as if the Shots were about to take the lead as a well-threaded ball found Ferguson who latched on and ran at the Wycombe goal, only to be flagged offside to the consternation of the Aldershot bench. Ferguson was caught offside on several occasions last time out against Poole, but it appeared this time the young striker should have been allowed to continue.

The half-time whistle brought to a close a very evenly contested first period, and that it would be an equally hard fought second half.

HT: Aldershot Town 0 Wycombe Wanderers 0

At half-time, Naph Williams was replaced by Amy Lawrence – the Shots quite clearly showing a sign of intent in throwing a third striker into the mix. The Shots hammered the Wycombe defence, with Moore, Ferguson and Wallman peppering the opponents' goal.

On 67 minutes Laura Wallman was brought off to be replaced by namesake Funnell.

GOAL FLASH: Shots 1-0 (Emma North 75' Pen)

7 minutes later and the Shots pressure finally tolled, as Lawrence was shoved to the ground and referee Stuart Hill immediately pointed to the spot. Captain Emma North took the duty of taking the penalty and slammed the ball into the roof of the net to give the Shots the lead with quarter-of-a-hour to play.

GOAL FLASH: Shots 1-1 (78' Pen)

However the match took another twist when three minutes later there was another penalty awarded – this time against the Shots as Caz Shephard was adjudged to have tripped a Wycombe attacker inside the area, despite claiming she got the ball first. The video replay suggested that Shephard took the ball and the player almost simultaneously, and was merely unfortunate to have been judged guilty. The penalty was slammed home past Callie Messingham, putting the visitors back into the game.

With 7 minutes to go it there was a collision between Lawrence and the Wanderers 'keeper, and it was the latter who came off worse as she lay motionless inside her area for well over a minute before slowly regaining her feet and play was restarted. Two minutes later and it was Jade Ferguson's turn to hit the floor, as a ball downfield from Shephard hit the striker in the face, knocking her out briefly.

GOAL FLASH: Shots 2-1 (Jade Ferguson 90')

Whether the incident affected her or not, in the last minute of the match some brilliant footwork and some resilience to stay on her feet resulted in Ferguson slotting home from close range to win the game for the Shots.

With referee Hill indicating five additional minutes, there were some nervous moments on the Shots bench, but the full time whistle was greeted with jubilation by the players, management and more than 50 supporters who had turned up to watch. Although there were several minor injuries suffered by players during the afternoon's proceedings, it wasn't going to take away from the fact that an excellent team performance couple by excellent managerial tactics earned an excellent win.

FT: Aldershot Town 2 Wycombe Wanderers 1

Squad

1. Callie Messingham
3. Holly Gayler
4. Di Smith
5. Naph Williams (14. Amy Lawrence 46')
6. Sian Houghton
7. Emma North
10. Caz Shephard
11. Jade Ferguson
12. Laura Wallman (17. Laura Funnell 67')
15. Katie Salmon
16. Nikki Moore

Manager's Player of the Match: Sian Houghton

"A hard fought and well deserved victory against a good Wycombe Wanderers side today. We had to change our tactical approach on occasions and dig deep to get the result. We are showing signs of improvement week by week which is very pleasing." – **Manager Ryan Salmon**