

Woking Whirlwinds Rattle Robins
Woking 5-Surbiton Robins 0, Sunday 16th October 2011

In their first outing in the league this season, Woking Whirlwinds came away comfortable winners in what could be described as a game of 3 thirds.

From the outset, Woking dominated the game with a devastating mixture of great skills, good passing and energetic determination to win the ball personified by Paige. Surbiton were saved from a bigger defeat by their goalie who has already done a season in the county squad. After spending a few minutes camped out in the Surbiton D hitting balls at the goalie's pads the forwards briefly allowed the ball to get out. Caitie won the ball back & dribbled it back into the D, passing over to Laila to hit the ball into the back of the net after 5 minutes of play. Only 3 minutes later, and after absorbing more pressure and allowing Woking to practice a couple of newly worked and well organised short corners, Surbiton made a rare break away only to be stopped in their tracks by the some determined tackling by Helena. The ball was passed on to Catie who, in one of many nifty runs of the day paired up with Hannah M, who created space to allow some lovely interplay, to carry the ball back around the sticks of the Surbiton midfield and into the D. The ball was passed onto new girl Phoebe who took a firm strike at goal only to see the ball repelled once again by the keeper, this time only as far as Laila who, now the goalie was out of position, was able to put the ball across the goal to the well positioned stick of India who kept her head and was able to place the ball into the open goal on her first outing with Woking.

More attacking play continued after the restart with all 5 of the forwards having chances and the midfield also lining up to have a go. Captain Macy was working tirelessly and effectively in the midfield to stop the ball from escaping from the Surbiton half with Hannah B and Paige helping to mop up any loose balls and skillfully feeding them back into the players in the D whilst Catie was dominating the middle of the pitch. The defensive line of Jasmine and Helena were starting to look bored and Jess in goal was going to have to use a telescope to get a look at the ball.

12 minutes into the game, a free hit outside of the D was smartly taken by Hannah B and driven straight into the D and a shot taken before the Surbiton defence could wake up to her intelligent use of the advantage. Another good save by the keeper saw the ball come out wide to Catie who was able to take a shot from a wide angle which was missed by everyone in front of the net and into the inside of the side board of the goal to bring the score to 3-0 which it remained for the rest of the 3rd.

6 minutes into the 2nd of the 3 periods, Catie and Issy C fought hard against the Surbiton midfield who worked, yet again, to try to get the ball out from their 25. Some great strength from the Woking players saw Catie come away with the ball. A pass to Laila, camping out near the keeper, allowed her to get a shot away but once again the keeper was equal to the task and had her pads firmly in the way of the shot. As Issy A stood patiently by the back post ready to put away any balls that came past

the goalie, Laila flicked the ball over the surprised keepers pads and into the net. Unfortunately, Issy's good positioning by the goal was often missed in the attempt to make a more direct route through. More attacking play saw the midfield drawn further upfield and left the team vulnerable to the counter attack. A couple of times, Surbiton attempted to break away. On one occasion, they found themselves 6 against Jasmine and Helena who were equal to the task and managed to get the tackles in to hold up progress and move the ball back where it belonged, in the Surbiton half. Macy, Hannah M and Issy C ran hard to get back behind the defence and were there to drive the ball away on the occasions when the home team managed to get over the half way line.

6 minutes after goal number 4 and after much battling in the D, Woking won another penalty corner. Surbiton cleared it from the D but only as far as Paige who was hovering near the 25 waiting to mop up any ball which dared to stray that far. Paige took the ball and ran it back at the D, then let rip with a screamer; the shot of the match. It made a satisfying clunk as it hit the back of the goal.

For the final 3rd, Jess was released from the goal having not seen the ball for the whole of the match and Hannah M kindly put on the pads to take her place and allow her to play some solid defensive hockey. Unfortunately, the final 3rd was not the best and Surbiton continued to battle hard to defend their goal. With 21 of the 22 players all squashed into half a pitch & most of them in the Surbiton 25, there wasn't much space for flowing hockey and the opportunities for passing the ball around to make space were sometimes missed in the attempt to get another shot at the goal keepers pads. A couple of times Surbiton gave their support some cause for optimism as the ball broke into the Woking half of the pitch with not a defender in sight. Hannah M raised herself from her seat on the backboard of the goal only to see the defence and midfield outrun the Surbiton attack and break down the attack before it had a chance to put the goal under any threat.

All in all though a good team performance. There were many good skills on show and some intelligent runs and passing of the ball. Possible improvements would be to make more use of the space as there were often times where there were huge gaps with large numbers of players hanging around the ball and times where choices were made to put the ball back into the muddle when there were players positioning themselves in spaces who could have made better use of the ball. I've been told that I haven't seen the best of the Whirlwinds yet. You can be better! I can't wait....