

The Phantoms headed east on the M62 last Saturday for their first foray into Yorkshire and a match against the Bradford Sabres. There was a minor drama in the changing room pre game when Gareth Dobson, who'd arrived at the venue nice and early, discovered he'd left his shorts at home. The panic was short lived though, as he managed to borrow a pair from a friendly Sabres player.

On the ice, the game got off to a fast start, with both teams giving maximum effort to be first on the score sheet. The general run of play was with the Phantoms though and the pressure eventually told when Toby Beevers netted the first at 4.45, ably assisted by Roland Flook. The game restarted with the same high energy play but it was then the Sabres turn, reaping the reward for their efforts when they scored an excellent breakaway goal as the clock hit 7.15; netted by our own Billy O'Gorman who was helping them out for the night due to their short bench. The joy of the equaliser was short lived though as the Phantoms came straight back with a marker at 7.38, scored by Ludo Krempasky from Mike Foster and Toby Beevers.

Constant pressure from the Phantoms was keeping the Sabres on the back foot causing some frustration in the home team; this led to the first penalty of the match when they were forced to go short handed for slashing. The Phantoms used the power play to good advantage and capitalized on the opportunity with a goal from Nick Venables and another assist for Rowland Flook. The first period played out with no further goals or incidents.

The second period started with the same energy as the first although it was apparent that the home team were starting to flag a little due to only having a small squad on the bench. Saying that, the Sabres continued to put up a strong defence which kept the Phantoms at bay until Nick Venables netted his second of the night at 26.24, this time assisted by Rob Lee and Toby Beevers. The Phantoms continued to pile on the pressure, and the effort was repaid; in a little under 3 minutes later (29.22) Jaro Bartos made it 5-1 with help from Mal Singleton and that man Beevers again! The Sabres kept their heads up and continued to push hard but despite this most of their effort went into repelling the Phantoms continuing onslaught. However, there were a few confused, shaky moments at the Phantoms end just after the mid point of the period which resulted in Rob Lee being called for holding, giving the home team a man advantage. Unfortunately for the Sabres they were unable to make the most of it as the Phantoms defence kept them out of the zone for most of the 2 minutes, even coming close to getting a short handed goal. Despite sustained effort from both teams the period ended with the same score line, 5-1.

The start of the third was similar to the previous two periods with both teams giving maximum effort and going for goal. At just under 2 minutes into the period though, the Sabres collected their second penalty of the game for body checking. The home team mounted a good defence and, even with the man advantage, the Phantoms were unable to notch up another goal during the 2 minutes. The pace was now beginning to tell on both teams and it was nearly 15 minutes into the period before the Phantoms slotted in the final goal of the game. Although credited to Mike Foster on the game sheet the actual scorer was Nick Venables again, picking up his hat trick for the night with an assist, also the third of the night, from Rowland Flook.

All in all an excellent game, thoroughly enjoyed by both teams, both of which gave maximum effort from the start to the final whistle; a deserved win for the Phantoms but the final score, 6-1, could have been different had the home team had a full squad.