

# Kingston Diamonds Newsletter

Issue 9

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## Diamonds Premier

### **The Premier Diamonds had their last three games of the season this month with an away trip to Slough before home games vs Nottingham and Widnes.**

The Prems kicked off a busy month of May with a long trip to Slough. With Slough playing out of a temporary rink with a tiny ice pad it was bound to be an interesting game. The Diamonds came out strongly and played probably their most competitive period of the season, matching Slough in shots with 10 a piece in the first period. It was the Phantoms who broke the deadlock at 11.13. Keeper Charlotte Cook made an outstanding first save but could stretch for the rebound as Kellond fired home for 1-0.

The teams continued to battle in a close game with either side trading chances but the Diamonds, not used to the small ice, struggled to play an effective system. Either team were given chances on the powerplay but both goaltenders stood tall and the only other goal came in at 48.06 when Hadden made it 2-0.

The Diamonds piled on the pressure in the last period, outshooting Slough but they couldn't find a way past Walker in the Phantoms net. This was one of the most competitive games that the Prems have played this season but again they couldn't find a way to win. Onwards and upwards to the final two games.

### **Final Score Slough 2-0 Kingston**

Next up for the Prems was Nottingham. With their only win so far being against this team the Diamonds were looking for a repeat and that's what they did.

They started fast and furious with several chances in the opening minutes including Lois Tomlinson just missing a sitter off a great pass from Dannie Newlove (playing her first senior game) and Chloe Matthews opened the scoring at 7.10 with a nice solo effort. Nottingham equalised 7 minutes later with a bad bounce bobbling past Cook in the Diamonds net. Spirit of the game Reagan Downing soon replied with her first goal of the evening at 18.51 to see the Diamonds lead 2-1 into the break.

They were quick off the mark in the second period too as Reagan scored her second at 33.13, assisted Caren Callaghan and Chloe Matthews. Kiana Tait scored her first senior goal at 38.02 to extend the lead to 4-1.

The Diamonds continued their goal scoring frenzy in the final stanza as they wore down the Nottingham team; CJ Ashton scored her first of the game at 41.08 with a lovely tip in on the powerplay, assists from Tait and Beth Barwell. Reagan Downing couldn't stop scoring and netted her hat trick goal at 43.42, finishing with ease past Cramer in the Nottingham net. She waited only 3 minutes to score her next goal as she widened the margin to 7-1 at 47.27, assisted Barwell. It was then CJ's turn to score again as she grabbed her second at 53.19, with a brilliant play in the offensive zone, assisted Aimee Baldwin. Then Chloe Matthews scored her second of the game at 55.33 from a nice pass from Caren Callaghan. Reagan Downing scored her 5<sup>th</sup> goal at 59.12 as the Diamonds hit the perfect ten, assisted Lois Tomlinson and Caren Callaghan.

The Prems have battled all year long and have lost out in some very close games, finally the hard work came to fruition as they dominated in this game, several players stood out, in particular the Captain, Beth Barwell, who led by example all game and was untouchable all over the ice.

This is a real confidence booster for the girls who play their final game of the season next week vs Widnes.

### **Final Score Kingston 10-1 Nottingham**

The Prems finished what can only be described as a 'rocky' season, at home to Widnes. Going into the game with nothing to lose but with a chance to prevent Widnes reaching the playoffs the Diamonds started strongly. Just 2.23 into the game Reagan Downing put the Diamonds ahead as a weak shot from the outside trickled five-hole on Tegan Lavery in the Widnes net. The game was a particularly feisty one and each team had its fair share of penalties, with Widnes on the powerplay, Katie Hills tied the game at 17.03. Then, a terrible display of officiating gifted Widnes their second goal, with Diamonds goalie Charlotte Cook knocked backwards by a Widnes player and without a helmet, Leen De Decker jammed the puck home. Despite valid complaints of 'player in the crease' and 'goalie interference' the goal was allowed to stand, such a shame that we don't have the luxury of video reviews!

The Diamonds were determined not to let that swing the momentum and pushed hard in the second period, with more penalties to either side as the game rose in intensity and physicality the Diamonds found themselves killing a penalty. Reagan Downing didn't seem to notice that we were supposed to be at a disadvantage and so scored anyway! Tying the game at 29.48 with a shorthanded tally assisted CJ Ashton.

The third period Widnes' physical play got a little bit out of hand as Hills was assessed a 10 minute misconduct and they had a player ejected from the game for kicking. Unfortunately the Diamonds couldn't convert on the ensuing powerplay and Widnes took the lead as Williams finished high at 49.24.

The Diamonds pressed hard but couldn't find the tying goal. A bittersweet end as a great game of hockey between two closely matched teams was decided by controversy.

### **Final Score Kingston 2-3 Widnes**

## **Diamonds Elite**

**The Elites had the busiest month of the three teams with 5 games in 4 weeks. Two games each against Swindon and Bracknell and a Yorkshire battle with Sheffield.**

The Elites set to work on their playoff push with a game against Swindon. Testing out some new line combinations it was clear that they clicked from the start as Shannon Jones connected a sweet pass from Reagan Downing at 5.27 for 1-0. Less than a minute later Hannah Worthington doubled the Diamonds lead after some hard work from CJ Ashton saw the puck loose in the crease for Hannah to tap home at 6.18. The Diamonds continued their rampant form and Reagan Downing scored a beauty at 8.28, going 'bar-down' for 3-0. Swindon managed to dampen any further attacks in this period but were heavily outshot 28-6. It took the Diamonds a little longer to break down the Topcats in the second period but Hannah Gibson made sure to extend the lead at 35.55 as she scored a brilliant deflection, tipping in Beth Barwell's shot for 4-0. The Diamonds continued to dominate the shot-count but Swindon goalie, Moore, pulled off some excellent saves to keep the Diamonds at bay. The scoring was finalised at 47.06 after a scramble in the Swindon crease saw the puck trickle past Moore, there was some confusion over who got the final touch but Abbie Thornton was credited with the goal. A thoroughly dominant performance and a big two points for the Elites in their playoff race.

### **Final Score Kingston 5-0 Swindon**

The Elites next faced the Sheffield Shadows and knew that they must win in order to keep their playoff hopes alive, but so did Sheffield! It was Sheffield who broke the deadlock at 13.44 as Hollie Neenan batted the puck home from close range. The Diamonds came out fighting in the second period and really pinned Sheffield back, dominating the shot-count, they equalised at 26.36 as Sarah Hutchinson jammed the puck into the net after a scramble in front of Gilbert, goal assisted by Helen Emerson and Abbie Thornton. The Shadows would not give in though and they retook the lead as an unfortunate bounce gifted a breakaway to Jodie Bloom who made no mistake and fired low to give Sheffield a 1-2 lead. It was now the Diamonds turn to show their resilience and a wonderful play saw them equalise again. Shannon Jones made a lovely saucer pass to Reagan Downing in the neutral zone, who laid the puck off to Sarah Hutchinson who sniped top shelf for her second of the game at 39.25. This time the Diamonds were not going to let Sheffield back into the game and they continued to pressure them at every opportunity, finally they were gifted an opportunity on the powerplay. Some nice play down low saw Hannah Worthington make a nice pass to Jones, who had her shot saved by Gilbert but the puck trickled behind her and CJ Ashton slammed it home for the Game-Winning Goal at 49.19. The Shadows tried to press for a tying goal but the Diamonds shut them down and ground out the win!

It certainly wasn't a pretty game but it is a massive two points to put the Diamonds in a firm playoff position with 3 games to play.

### **Final Score Kingston 3-2 Sheffield**

The Elites had their second game in as many days as Bracknell made the trip north. The Diamonds knew this would be a tough game but as always they were up for the fight! The Diamonds actually came out the stronger of the teams and pinned Bracknell in their zone for some time before the Queen Bees managed to push back. Each team traded chances in the opening period but it was Bracknell who led into the first break. Abbie Sylvester slotted home from close range with just 33 seconds remaining in the period for 0-1. The Diamonds in trademark style fought back and around midway through the second period Reagan Downing tied the game. A wonderful pass from Shannon Jones on a 2 on 1 gave Downing an easy finish, a fine example of how well that line has been playing recently!

Unfortunately the Queen Bees weren't finished, they were given an opportunity on the powerplay and Chrissy Newman scored to help Bracknell regain the lead. There was no further scoring and despite the Diamonds piling on the pressure late in the third period, they couldn't find a way to tie the game.

### **Final Score Kingston 1-2 Bracknell**

A week later and the same opponents went head to head once again. This time it was the Diamonds who opened the scoring; a shot from Kelly McBride hit a leg in front of net and fell perfectly to Shannon Jones who finished easily past the sprawling netminder. However, just 17 seconds later Chrissy Newman tied the game for Bracknell, assisted Sylvester. Again the teams traded chances and both goaltenders stood tall, but Bracknell pulled ahead at 16.04 as Newman scored her second of the game. Bracknell showed their prowess in the second period and dominated the shot count, limiting the Diamonds to just one chance. Holly Steeples managed to turn away all but one of Bracknell's attempts as they extended their lead at 26.16, Emily Harris the scorer. The Queen Bees finalised the scoring at 45.22 as GB Captain Leanne Ganney finished past Steeples. Not the result we wanted but we go back to the grind and prepare to face this team in our playoff semi-final.

### **Final Score Kingston 1-4 Bracknell**

The final game of the regular season saw the Diamonds take on Swindon. Shannon Jones opened the scoring just 34 seconds into the goal as she connected on a nice pass from Reagan Downing. The Diamonds dominated the period and doubled their advantage at 6.41 as Hannah Worthington finished on the doorstep after some good work down low from Kiana Tait and CJ Ashton. Shannon Jones scored her second of the game with a nice finish in close at 13.02 but Swindon managed to keep any further attacks at bay until the end of the period. Despite outshooting Swindon 14-4 in the second period, the Diamonds couldn't find another goal as Gemma Davies shut the door for the Topcats. In fact, it took until nearly the end of the game for the Diamonds to break through again. At 55.07 Hannah Worthington latched onto a pass from Ashton and went streaking down the left wing, before cutting in near the goal and one-handing the puck over Davies for a beautiful goal and her second of the game. A good end to the regular season for the Elites as they now look ahead to the Women's Trophy Weekend (3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> June)

### **Final Score Kingston 4-0 Swindon**

## Diamonds U16

**The 16s finished their season with a home double header vs Yorkshire rivals, Sheffield Shadows on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of May.**

The first game didn't start to the Diamonds plan as Madeline Fuller put the Shadows up 0-1 with just 2.16 gone in the game, assisted Chloe Riley.

The Diamonds got back into the game from there and managed to snuff out any further attacks from Sheffield in the rest of the first period and the whole of the second period, despite being outshot.

Sheffield continued to test Diamonds goalie Olivia Brooks and they finally were rewarded at 41.53 when their captain Elizabeth Saunders scored to put the game to bed, Riley picked up her second assist on the goal.

The Diamonds should be pleased with their effort, keeping the game really close against a tough Sheffield side.

### **Final Score Kingston 0-2 Sheffield**

The next day and the same opponents went at it again. The game was scheduled to be held at Sheffield but a fixture mix up meant that it was moved to Kingston.

Sheffield's win the day before had guaranteed them the league title but the Diamonds were on a mission to stop them clean sweeping the league, winning every game they've played.

The Diamonds came out more determined in the game and tested Sheffield goalie, Gilbert, a couple of times in the opening minutes. Sheffield returned the favour and Brooks was called upon to make some key saves early in the game. The first and second periods finished without any scoring despite their being 33 shots in total in the first two periods. In the third period Sheffield ramped up the pressure, throwing everything they could at the Diamonds but the defence stood strong and absorbed everything. Sheffield finally broke the deadlock at 39.26 when were picked up a rebound and fired it over the scrambling Brooks.

Soon after, the Diamonds got themselves an odd man rush but Robinson couldn't corral the puck into a gaping net.

Sheffield finished the scoring moments later with a nice shot from Garbett finding its way over Brooks at 41.14.

The Diamonds once again fought every second against the league winners and finish the season with their heads held high.

### **Final Score Kingston 0-2 Sheffield**

## Playoffs

**This year's playoffs will take place at the Women's Trophy weekend on 3rd/4<sup>th</sup> June 2017 as team from across the country look for playoff glory.**

The Diamonds Elite team have qualified for this year's Women's Trophy Weekend playoffs after finishing 4<sup>th</sup> in the league. They will take on the league champions, Bracknell Queen Bees, in their semi-final on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> June; face-off is scheduled for 1:15pm.

The weekend gets underway at 9:45am on the Saturday with the first Div 1 semi-final, North Runners-up, Telford Wrekin Raiders, take on South Runners-up, Basingstoke Bison Ladies. After that is the first WPL semi-final, when winners, Streatham, face 4<sup>th</sup> placed Widnes.

After the Diamonds game is the second Div1 semi, with North3rd placed, Coventry Phoenix, taking on South Champions, Bracknell FireBees. Following this is the second WPL semi with runners-up, Chelmsford, taking on 3<sup>rd</sup> placed Milton Keynes.

Finally, we see the second WEL semi-final as runners-up, Solihull, do battle with 3<sup>rd</sup> placed Guildford.

After the semi-finals we move onto Super Sunday where all of the finals will take place.

First up is the Division One final at 10.35am, with the winners of each semi-final going head-to-head. The winner of this final will gain promotion to the WPL for the 2017/18 season.

Following on from that is the WPL final, with the winners from both semi-finals battling for playoff supremacy.

Next up is the U16 playoff final. This is the show-piece for the U16s with the winner of the South league (Bracknell) taking on the winner of the North league (Sheffield).

Then comes the grand finale, the Women's Elite final, competing for the Bill Britton Trophy. The winners from each semi-final will do battle to win the most coveted trophy in British Women's hockey, this will be a showpiece of the best female talent on offer in this country and is guaranteed to be a wonderful advert for women's hockey, regardless of which two teams have earned their place in the game.



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