Premier Match Report: April 21

**Women:**

The Somerville premier women’s team suffered its first away defeat of the 2018 season to a well drilled Southern side at Papatoetoe under the coaching direction of currently injured Black Stick Simon Child.

Somerville went down 2-0 early in the match despite vastly superior possession and circle penetration statistics. Liz Thompson, Commonwealth Games gold medallist added vigour through the midfield however in the latter stages of the half collided with key defender Belinda Smith. The concussion collision had Smith hospitalised briefly for observation and it was left to Hannah Stewart with Jas McQuinn and Maddie Dowe to hold the backline in defence.

The home crowd appreciated Southern’s gold medallist Madi Doar also turning out for her club and she combined well with sister Katie along with schoolmate Kendall Vaughan and stalwart Jess Ellis in the midfield.

Despite the half time 2-0 deficit the Somerville side continued to dominate proceedings finishing with 45 circle penetrations to Southern 18, with the shots on target statistic also favouring Somerville 13 to 6. Goalkeeper Sophia Howard for the home team proved to be a deciding factor on the day.

Unfortunately statistics don’t always tell the story and it was Southern who went 3 -0 ahead from a direct penalty corner midway through the second half. Julia King, Phoebe Steele and Polly Inglis worked tirelessly, and it was Julia King who notched one back for the visitors from a trademark reverse stick shot late in the match to add some respectability to the score-line. A Jas McQuinn penalty corner bullet 2 minutes from time unfortunately hit the post and Southern were dogged in defence to the end.

**Men:**

The Somerville men faced a daunting task away against a Southern side with BlackStick mens captain Arun Panchia and fellow Blacksticks Marcus Child and Kim Kingstone. Despite this the game was in the balance for much of the first half. Both sides produced excellent opportunities but it was Southern that did better in the finishing department when a slick right side overload had the Somerville defence unable to scramble in time.

Mike Ritchie and Guy Borren created havoc for Southern and an equalizing goal was disallowed midway through the half. Once again the match seesawed with both sides intent on creating counter attack chances and just before half time the local team went 2-0 up much to the frustration of the Somerville defence.

The second half went much the same as the first, Dwayne Rowsell, Ben Poole and Brad Cosgrove provided stability at the back but for the most part the midfield although staunch failed to fire, Sam Houston was the best of this layer on the day. Southern continued its strong finishing form, however the final score-line of 4-0 was possibly flattering to the home side.

Not yet half way through this competitive first round the Somerville Premier team will want to move on quickly to the next phase of its campaign. A number of critical matches follow which will ultimately decide its fate for the latter part of the season.

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