

Leeds Schools FA (Girls) - 2 St Helens U11 Girls - 3

Our first home match of the season, and with a squad of eight girls (allowing us one substitute), the team were looking to improve on last weeks defeat.

The match was played at St Theresa's Primary School over four fifteen minute quarters to allow all the sixteen girls from the St Helens team to take part.

The St Helens girls appeared to be a strong well organised team as they warmed up prior to kick off, and things looked ominous as they took the lead within the first few moments of the game after some tentative play by the Leeds girls.

However, this seemed to be the kick start that the team required and to their credit they battled and harried their way back into the game and as the quarter wore on began to impose themselves on the St Helens team.

As the Leeds players continued to press the St Helens defence, Jess Holdsworth made progress down the left hand side, cutting in with a shot that crept in between the legs of the Saints goalkeeper

In the second quarter, buoyed by their goal, Leeds continued to work hard with some strong running and tackling from Jordan Curry and Jess Holdsworth, and a tireless performance up front from Joanne Busfield who never allowed the St Helens defenders to settle.

Despite Leeds growing dominance St Helens retook the lead right at the end of the second quarter, after a deep cross found their striker all alone at the back post to finish past Libby Gunn who could do nothing about the goal.

Again the Leeds girls did not let their heads go down and they continued to take the game to St Helens. The Leeds midfield continued to compete and push forward, whilst the defence trio of Holly Bisset, Grace Molyneux and Libby Gunn stood resolute against some strong running talented St Helens forwards.

The Leeds team received their just rewards when Jess Holdsworth took hold of the ball on the edge of the St Helens box and rifled a shot beyond the despairing goalkeeper, to give Leeds a deserved equaliser.

For the remainder of the third quarter and into the fourth, the game was nip and tuck as both teams continued to look for the winning goal. Leeds continued to create openings in the St Helens defence and with a little more confidence in their shooting abilities the girls could have scored a well earned winner. St Helens were just as eager to travel home with a victory to celebrate and the Leeds defence were kept on their toes by the committed St Helens strikers.

The match was settled midway through the last quarter when a shot from outside the box took a fierce bounce in front of Libby Gunn and flew into the net giving St Helens a narrow and hard won victory

A harsh result for the Leeds girls who deserved so much more from a game that they dominated for long periods.

However the signs for the season are encouraging as the girls have begun to work for each other and play as a team, showing commitment and effort which will reap rewards throughout the remaining matches