Women’s netball: Liverpool Hope University 38-32 Keele University 2nd

Hope Netball kept up their fine home form by defeating Keele University 2nds 38-32 in a firm performance. The score line reflects a penetrating display of attacking play, and when questions were asked of the defence they were answered with flying colours.

The result underlines the steady progress Hope have been making all season. Since meeting Keele Univeristy back in November Hope have played 5 games winning 3 and losing two that were relatively tight. Therefore, Keele University would prove a stubborn test. As Goal Attacker Roisin Finnegan highlighted that Keele are “a side that you could be three points up against and still feel like you can lose the game”, reinforcing the quality of the opponent.

The first quarter produced an end-to-end game. Both sides went for it from minute one, fearless in attack but always looking vulnerable in turnovers of possession. Hope started the stronger moving the ball well in transition between attack and defence. This reflected in the score by the end of the quarter when it was 9-5 in Hope’s favour.

However, the second quarter proved to be a sterner test for Hope as Keele came back fighting. The score being on a knife-edge as it was 16-15 by the end. Although, there was a sense of calmness that Hope would not surrender this lead. The defence being marshalled expertly by the captain Jess Willis saw out the remainder of the quarter.

Another fearful moment in the third quarter was when Keele once again came within touching distance of Hope’s lead - with the score line at 24-23, the game was still in the balance. Goal Keeper Sophie Hewitson played well to intercept and snuff out any comeback from Keele and the attack, being too strong, extended Hope’s lead to 28-24.

Victory was confirmed in the latter stages of the game as Hope made their advantage count. The attacking play proving ruthless between Roisin Finnegan and Jahalisha Dunkley meant the score ended 38-32.

A magnificent effort was matched by a deserved win. Considering Keele were above Hope in the league, the match didn’t unfold this way. Roisin Finnegan described the game as “intense” demonstrating the relentless pace of the game. This win will give Hope plenty of belief going into their final fixture against Manchester Metropolitan University.