

## COLTS AND COBRAS DOMINATE DAY TWO

Tuesday 10th January 2012

It was a day of domination for the ACT in the Open Women's competition as both the Cobras and Colts claimed maximum points from their two matches to lead the way alongside NSW Lightning with two rounds remaining in a tight league ladder.

A late goal from Sarah Crittenden proved to be the difference in the traditional clash of the heavyweights, ACT Cobras and NSW Thunder, in the opening match on Day Two of the Open Women's Championships. Crittenden struck with time running out to settle a pulsating clash which could have gone either way. Both goalkeepers played wonderfully well with Cobras' Klara Manenica making a superb stop from the ever-dangerous Renee Tomkins whilst at the other end Tani Rosekelly denied Sabrina Spinapolice in a one-on-one. Spinapolice had brought the Cobras back into the match in the first half with a smart finish on a quick Cobras counter-attack to cancel out a goal from Thunder's Claire Walsh early on. For long periods it seemed like that would be that but Crittenden struck close to the full time whistle with what could prove to be a crucial goal.

The ACT Colts followed the Cobras onto the court for their second match of the tournament hoping to make amends following their opening day loss to Southern NSW. That they did, and against a highly-rated Queensland side, was in no small part to the effective finishing of Ellie Raymond and a spirited all-round display in which every squad member played a full part. The match was a close affair with neither side able to break the deadlock in the opening exchanges. It took a moment of brilliance to give the Colts the lead with Raymond lashing a free-kick into the Queensland net off the base of the post close to half-time. Raymond was at it again midway through the second period with another sublime finish, rounding off a swift team move, as the Colts got home 2-0.

NSW Lightning meanwhile continued their explosive start to the tournament with a 3-1 win over Southern NSW. Kathryn Mladineo put the Lightning in front in the first half with a neat finish, her second goal of the competition, and that solitary strike looked likely to separate the teams at the interval. However, Southern equalised from the penalty spot after the referee adjudged a shirt-pull in the area, with Sarah Yatim thumping the spot-kick high into the roof of the net. A much feistier match developed in the second half with Lightning award a penalty of their own for a foul in the box. Lauren Diduszko mirrored Yatim with a firmly struck effort flashing into the net. That was but a prelude to the goal of the game and the finish that ensured the Lightning would take the points. An incisive move ended with a stunning first-time shot from Jessica Beale that thumped into the net off the underside of the crossbar for a fitting end to a fine Lightning display.

The evening games brought a change of fortune for NSW Lightning who ran out of steam somewhat as they were beaten 4-1 by the ACT Colts who leapfrogged them on the table in the process. The Colts had to do it the hard way though coming from 0-1 down to an early goal from the in-form Kathryn Mladineo. The ACT team had an ideal chance to respond when Ellie Raymond was brought down in the area but her resultant penalty was well-saved by Melanie McCauley,. Raymond atoned for her miss moments later with a well-taken goal as the teams ended the half all-square. It didn't take long for the Colts to turn the game round with Catherine Brown

striking a missile into the top corner to celebrate her birthday in some style. The Colts then moved up a gear and Laura Sofoulis tapped in for 3-1 whilst a goal two minutes later from Clare Munro completed a satisfactory evening's work. NSW Lightning lost Dominique Caridad to a straight red card in the final moments for foul and abusive language.

The Cobras then followed their Colts counterparts into the winners circle with a tenacious 2-1 victory over Queensland. As with the Colts the Cobras were forced to come back from a goal down to gain three points after the lively Georgina Bridges scampered away to slot home the opener for the Maroons. It was a lead that they looked likely to hold onto at the break until a splendid goal from Hayley Buckingham had the home crowd on its feet. Buckingham collected a through ball, controlled and spun to send a vicious strike beyond the reach of Tegan McKee in the Queensland goal. After that the match played out in an end-to-end fashion with both teams creating chances to win it. Sarah Crittenden saw a goal chalked off for the Cobras before they struck the killer blow two minutes from time. A long throw from Louisa Marzotto was controlled by Sabrina Spinapolice and she in turn laid the ball back for Alison Lound to cut inside and stab the winner into the corner of the net.

A typically tight NSW derby completed proceedings at the AIS Arena with NSW Thunder seeing off the challenge of Southern NSW 3-1 to put themselves right into contention with the ladder leaders heading into a pivotal day three match with the ACT Cobras. The Thunder took the lead in the match with a finely worked goal by Stephanie Haim, her second of the competition. After a period of keep-ball, whilst they jockeyed for position, Haim received a pass, turned and ran at the heart of the Southern NSW defence before sending her shot underneath the keeper and into the net for a lovely goal. That proved to be the only goal of the opening half as, despite the best efforts of all concerned, the defences held sway. It was a different story within thirty seconds of the re-start as a goalmouth scramble resulted in Manisso Michael slotting home from inside the area for 1-1. Equality was short-lived though as a fierce hit from Ellen Wheatley restored Thunder's lead before Claire Walsh secured the points.

#### OPEN WOMEN

##### Round 2

ACT Cobras 2 (Sabrina Spinapolice, Sarah Crittenden) NSW Thunder 1 (Claire Walsh)  
 Queensland 0 ACT Colts 2 (Ellie Raymond (2)) Southern NSW 1 (Sarah Yatim (pen))  
 NSW Lightning 3 (Kathryn Mladineo, Lauren Diduszko (pen), Jessica Beale)

##### Round 3

NSW Lightning 1 (Kathryn Mladineo) ACT Colts 4 (Ellie Raymond, Catherine Brown, Laura Sofoulis, Clare Munro) ACT Cobras 2 (Hayley Buckingham, Alison Lound)  
 Queensland 1 (Georgina Bridges) NSW Thunder 3 (Stephanie Haim, Ellen Wheatley, Claire Walsh) Southern NSW 1 (Manisso Michael)

#### TABLE

Pos	Team	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS	
1	ACT Colts	3	2	0	0	1	7	3	+4	6
2	ACT Cobras	3	2	0	0	1	5	4	+1	6
3	NSW Lightning		3	2	0	0	1	6	6	0

4	NSW Thunder	3	1	1	1	6	5	+1	5
5	Southern NSW	3	1	0	2	4	7	-3	3
6	Queensland	3	0	1	2	3	6	-3	2

3pts - WIN, 2pts - Score Draw, 1pt - No-Score Draw

#### LEADING SCORERS

3 Ellie RAYMOND (ACT Colts), Kathryn MLADINEO (NSW Lightning)

2 Hayley BUCKINGHAM (ACT Cobras), Clare MUNRO (ACT Colts), Stephanie HAIM, Claire WALSH (NSW Thunder), Sarah YATIM (Southern NSW)

1 Sarah CRITTENDEN, Alison LOUND, Sabrina SPINAPOLICE (ACT Cobras), Catherine BROWN, Laura SOFOULIS (ACT Colts), Jessica BEALE, Lauren DIDUSZKO, Rose SCARLATO (NSW Lightning), Renee TOMKINS, Ellen WHEATLEY (NSW Thunder), Marybeth BANKS, Georgina BRIDGES, Melissa WECKERT (Queensland), Manisso MICHAEL, Natalie SPIROVSKI (Southern NSW)