

Mid Somerset 2nd XI.....2
Bristol 2nd XI.....6

Mid-Somerset seconds started their season at 11.40am on Saturday, unfortunately the match started at 11.30am and by that time Mids were two goals down. The first half continued to be dominated by Bristol.

In the second half honours were more even. Mike Davis pulled one back for Mids early on with a goal that found the keeper out of position, this compensating for his two first half efforts deflected millimetres past the post.

Bristol scored a fifth before Paul Manley was in the right place to guide home a ball from mid air. A sixth goal for Bristol rounded off a match that Mids had lost in the first 10 minutes, but the second half performance and effort was encouraging for what is likely to settle down to being a younger side than Mids have fielded at this level for some years.

Mid Somerset 2nd XI.....1
ECV Hornets 2nd XI.....5

By the end of this game the size of Mid Somerset's task in staying in division two (SE) of the Sun Life League was clear to them.

Hornets brought a strong side with no weak links, and although at half-time Mids were hanging on to a 1-0 deficit, the second half saw Hornets coast to an easy victory. During the first 35 minutes Tom Medlicott had saved a penalty stroke to keep the game scoreless, and been unlucky to concede a goal from a waist-high cross in a game that was otherwise excellently umpired.

In the second half Hornets almost overran Mid Somerset, but excellent work from the full-back line, particularly Andy Cameron, kept the score to reasonable proportions. Their goals went from the sublime to the ridiculous: one was a superb far-post goal that would have ended up three fields away if the goal net had not got in the way, their last a mishit shot/pass that deceived the Mids defence as it bobbed and spun over the goal line.

Mids scored a consolation goal as Ashley Spearing combined well with Malcolm Chorlton on the right wing, leaving Chorlton to ghost past three defenders before slipping the ball under the advancing goalkeeper from an acute angle.

South East Div II: Chard 7 Taunton CS A 1, Mid-Somerset A 1 Exeter Hornets A 5, Minehead A 0 Exmouth 5, Shepton Mallet A 4 North Devon 2.

B 4 Bristol Aero B 2. South East Div 1: Chudleigh 4 Taunton CS 1, East Devon A 1 Taunton Vale B 2, Mid-Somerset 1 Okehampton 3, PGSOB 3 Bridport Hawks 1, Torbay A 3 Ottery Crickets 1. Div 2: Exeter Hornets A 2 Dawlish A 1, Exeter Univ B 0 Shepton Mallet A 0, Exmouth 6 Chard 2, North Devon 2 Minehead A 2, Taunton CS A 2 Mid-Somerset A 0, Div 3: Bridgwater B 2

North Devon 1st XI.....8
Mid Somerset 2nd XI.....0

The oddities of a league reorganisation and Mid Somerset's inability to field any more than nine players, with no regular goalkeeper, meant this 150-mile round-trip was always likely to be difficult. Mids were facing a 1st XI side when, in previous seasons, the North Devon 2nd XI had always proved a fair match. The visitors were on the end of a never-ending flow of attacks as, with only eight outfield players, they struggled to know what to do with the ball even when they did get possession. For all that, spirits never dropped, and despite the scoreline, Mids never stopped competing; the enthusiasm was a credit to all concerned.

The first half proved the point as North Devon

ran in five goals, taking all their chances with an efficiency that indicated a final score well beyond 10 would be likely. As it happened, a slightly changed Mids' defensive line-up, an excellent performance by Andy Cameron, standing in as a goalkeeper, and some woefully inaccurate shooting kept the score down to manageable proportions.

Mids could even have stolen a consolation goal as Ashley Spearing and Andrew Board played some intelligent hockey, and only the North Devon keeper forcing Board to the narrowest of angles saved the home side's blushes.

South East Division One: Chudleigh 1 Okehampton 4, East Devon A 2 Torbay A 3, Mid-Somerset 1 Taunton Vale B 1, Taunton CS 2 Bridport Hawks 3.
South East Division II: Dawlish A 6 Minehead A 3, Exeter Hornets A 3 Shepton Mallet A 0, Exeter Univ B 0 Chard 2, Exmouth 5 Taunton CS A 2, North Devon 8 Mid-Somerset A 0.

South East Div 1: Bridport Hawks 0 Okehampton 1, East Devon A 2 Chudleigh 2, Ottery Crickets B 1 Mid-Somerset 3, Taunton Vale B 4 Taunton CS 2, Torbay A 1 PGSOB 2.
South East Div 2: Chard 8 Dawlish A 0, Exmouth 4 Exeter Hornets A 2, Mid-Somerset A 0 Exeter Univ B 3, Minehead A 1 Shepton Mallet A 0, Taunton CSA 1 North Devon 3.

Mid Somerset 2nd XI.....2
Old Bristolians 2nd XI.....6

The curious feature of this game was that while the

overall result reflected the balance of play, the timing of the goals did not. Mid Somerset found themselves 4-1 down at the interval following a half in which they were not far behind Old Bristolians for possession and chances.

The visitors' opening goal had been matched by a clever goalward deflection by Gareth Seary from Malcolm Charlton's free-hit just outside the circle. Mike Davies had hit a post for the second week running and many other chances brought good saves or went very close.

Old Bristolians attacked in numbers and owed three of their goals to being quicker off the mark than Mids in latching on to rebounds off the keeper's pads. Their fourth was direct from a penalty corner.

For the first 10 minutes of the second half, Mids could justly claim to be the dominant side, but this flattered to deceive after Seary had scored his second, turning a penalty corner into the net.

The visitors soon went from strength to strength as Mids tired, and ran at will through the centre of the field to find attacking forwards making the best of the new rules. Almost ironically they scored only two more, both again after saves by Tom Medlicott in Mids goal.

On Saturday (September 28), there is a trial game at Edgarley School, Glastonbury, and anyone interested in playing hockey for Mid Somerset is invited to be at the pitch for an 11.30am start. Ring David Yelland, tel: (01985) 8444092 evenings, for further details.

Taunton CS 2nd XI.....2
Mid Somerset 2nd XI.....0

Taunton took the lead in the first two minutes of this Sun Life League match, with a harsh but correct penalty decision, as a stick tackle was adjudged deliberate in the shooting circle. Mid Somerset were left to spend the rest of the game trying to equalise in what was otherwise an even affair, with action at both ends.

Ultimately Mids paid the price for pushing forward too much and conceded too many penalty corners, one of which was eventually converted to ensure the home side gained the three points.

Mids' keeper Martin McBain played well in goal and with the younger players continuing to improve with every game, there is still hope, despite the side's next two league fixtures being against teams which would have been at 1st XI level in previous seasons.

Mid Somerset 2nd XI.....0
Exeter University 3rd XI.....3

Mid Somerset remain adrift at the foot of division two (SE) of the Sun Life League, with no points to their name and only one league goal, but this was another promising game.

Against opposition who had scored 13 goals in a previous league encounter at Minehead, Mids kept the scoresheet blank until halfway through the second half. The first 35 minutes saw Mids on the back foot for most of the time as the University worked the ball around the back and down the wings. However, solid defending at the edge of the circle kept their shooting chances down to a minimum and when they did get a shot at goal, Martin McBain was on hand to keep it out.

The second half started much the same until eventually Mids conceded a high-quality open play goal quickly followed by a penalty corner goal. Having lost the chance of an unlikely defensive draw, Mids seemed to find further inspiration in the forward line, causing some panic to the University defence by virtue of never giving up. A third open play goal for the University was again well worked and reflective of the balance of play, but a Mids side of whom seven are still of school age kept their spirits up and continued to play at a level that would have been beyond the imagination at the start of the season.

To date Mids have put in some excellent performances but have notably conceded goals in the second half of games they had held goalless until the break. However, at this rate of improvement they will surprise some opposition in the near future.

Mid Somerset 2nd XI.....1
Chipwrecks.....2

A late change of plan saw Mids' second string take

on the veteran's side from Chippenham in a highly enjoyable and satisfying game. The only disappointment for Mids had to be the scoreline, but compared to the style of play in this friendly fixture, this was almost immaterial.

Mids start their league season next week with a much younger side than has been normal, and it was the younger element who showed real improvements throughout this match. Andrew Board, Ashley Spearing and Jodie Wood all put in good performances and tactical thinking is starting to show as they learn at this level of hockey.

The visitors' opening goal owed much to poor marking by the defence at the back of the circle, but Mids were quick to learn from their mistake and restricted Chipwrecks on their chances until well into the second half when they took a 2-0 lead.

Meanwhile, Mids had started to put together some good hockey, and in the second half claimed five penalty corners, one of which was converted by David Yelland. However, the final goal could not be obtained and Chipwrecks left the field content with a victory.

● The contact for anyone interested in playing hockey at any level for Mid Somerset was misprinted last week. It is David Yelland, tel: (01985) 844092.

Mid Somerset 2nd XI.....0
Exmouth 1st XI.....3

Even the father and son combination of Pete and Paul Manley could not prevent Mid Somerset losing their third league match of the season.

The match, though, may be the start of Mids' revival, as the scoreline did not reflect the resilience shown in keeping Exmouth at bay in the first half with some solid defensive work, along with versatile and resolute keeping from Tom Medlicott, who once again saved a penalty flick in the second half for the second week running.

Gradually Exmouth's pressure began to tell after the turnaround. They finally scored twice after a series of penalty corners and then again in a well-worked move from open play.

Mids showed they have some talented young players in Ashley Spearing on the right wing, and a

tireless and tactically aware inside forward in Jodie Wood. Now all they have to do is put the opposition defences under pressure by creating and converting chances, and thus relieve their own defence.

Unfortunately, on Saturday, the Exmouth keeper was never really tested.

Dawlish 2nd XI.....3
Mid Somerset 2nd XI.....0

Mid-Somerset travelled to Dawlish in hope, rather than expectation, of at least their first point in this year's Sun Life League. They returned empty-handed, having been frustrated by an opposition who worked well together, one superbly taken goal, a curious umpiring decision and three goal opportunities that were missed by the narrowest of margins.

Despite the final scoreline, Mids were as close for most of the game as they have come all season to getting a point. They were 1-0 down at half-time, after an even half in which Dawlish took their chance well, and Mids had gone agonisingly close as Edward Medlicott's first-time shot left the goalkeeper floundering, but missed the goal by the width of a coat of paint.

The second half saw Dawlish virtually gifted their second goal as they were awarded a penalty corner in curious circumstances. A Mids player was penalised by the home-based umpire for dissent, and a free-hit outside the 25-yard line was promoted to a penalty corner, a draconian, if not improper, punishment for an offence when no culprit was even identified, let alone warned.

As Mids continued to press forward, Mark Hullah's effort went as close as could be, and Ashley Spearing was unlucky to see his effort strike an opposing player, both from penalty corners and both with the goalkeeper beaten.

Dawlish owed their third to superb piece of play. As another Mids penalty corner broke down, the home side swept the ball upfield in two passes to a player on the 25-yard line who controlled it and

moved to the edge of the circle before smashing an unstoppable shot past keeper McBain from 16 yards.