

Women's polo earns hard fought draw

York's women's polo team hosted Leeds University in their first UPolo match of the season on Monday and with a good mix of old and new faces they were hoping to build on the progress made under coach Nick Boaz last year. Leeds put the pressure on from the start but York were equal to it, Sarah Peacop making a quick steal early on to set up a counter attack and was unlucky to have her shot saved. Leeds were not rattled and managed to capitalise on a man up situation to break the deadlock but they were not ahead for long; a goal each for Beth Richards and player of the match Katherine Newton after some inspired passes from Ellie Roche meant the home side finished the quarter 2 – 1 up.



The second quarter started in a similarly positive fashion, a shot from last year's captain Fiona Whiting nearly evading the Leeds keeper. The visitors proved once again to be too strong on the counterattack and scored to bring the game level. With chances going begging for both teams Richards was fouled in the pit and won a penalty that she calmly converted. Captain and keeper Fran Falcini blocked several attempts on the York goal but a loose pass allowed a Leeds counterattack that they took advantage of and found the back of the net. York survived a last minute man down after Jenny Worrell was sent out and made sure the teams stayed level at the halfway point.

York's stand in coach Jack Jones switched things up a bit at the restart with the introduction of newcomers Rosalind Latham and Chloe Warrenner. The change nearly paid off after an interception by Warrenner set up Latham, who was unlucky to see her shot saved by the skilled Leeds keeper. It wasn't long until York broke the defence though with Roche securing her first goal of the campaign. Peacop continued her impressive display in defence and the Leeds shots that did make it past her were safely secured by Falcini. Both teams had several chances but it was the away side who converted them, scoring twice in quick succession before Richards grabbed another just before the break.

The fourth quarter was a tense affair, both teams piling pressure on the defence and trying to nudge in front. Newton and Whiting had sightings of goal saved and Falcini continued to cover York at the back. Neither side was able to find a way through though and the match finished 5-5. It was "a fair result between two evenly matched teams" said spectator Hannah How. Captain Falcini was pleased with how her team performed. "It was a really good team performance, with some excellent defending. As a goalkeeper, if you let less than 6 goals in during a match then you know you've had a good game but the credit should go to the defenders in front of me for keeping shots to a minimum."

YORK – Falcini, Latham, Newton, Roche, Peacop, Richards, Whiting, Cooke, Chidwick, Warrenner, Worrell, Jones

PLAYER OF THE MATCH – Katherine Newton