

Premier Division

Wimbledon kept goalless at 'fortress' Cambridge

Conference East round-up

by Sam Hawthorn

CAMBRIDGE CITY'S tenacious defensive display in their 2-0 victory over Conference East table-toppers **Wimbledon** is evidence enough that they can trouble high-flying **Harleston Magpies** in their next fixture – according to Dee Butler.

The first team manager praised City's solid defence after Tess Howard put her side ahead just five minutes into the game from a penalty corner, and added a second three minutes from time.

City nullified league-leaders Wimbledon, preventing them from playing their own game and Butler believes her side's intensity at home will help their cause when they welcome the Magpies on Saturday.

Just a day after City were held to a 1-1 draw by **St Albans**, they out-ran their opponents in a victory which keeps them in the hunt for a top-four finish.

Butler said: "We frustrated them because we were containing them really well. When we scored our second penalty corner to make it 2-0, the intensity just ramped up for the last few minutes.

"We knew Crista Cullen is a big player for them and we didn't want to give her any easy possession.

"If we play with the same determination as we did on Sunday then we will do well against Harleston Magpies this weekend.

"We like to play in the comfort of home and we have made our ground a fortress this season."

Howard's double condemned Wimbledon to only a second defeat of the season, their first since a 1-0 reverse to **Sevenoaks** at the start of October.

Elsewhere in the East, **Hampstead and Westminster** edged past **West Herts** with a 2-1 victory courtesy of two Amy Askew goals.

Askew put her side ahead from a corner rebound in the first half and, after an explosive half-time team talk sealed the win with a field goal.

The visitors missed several opportunities to extend their lead before **West Herts** scored a consolation goal in the last minute, through Anna Copel.

Captain Annebeth Wijtenburg berated her side's poor finishing and insisted they want to show the rest of league just how good they can be when they host rock bottom **Northampton Saints**, on Saturday.

"We just couldn't convert our chances. We are taking steps and improving the number of chances we are creating but we want to be putting more of them away," she said.

"We want to show the rest of the league that we are putting in big wins to send out a strong message to the other top sides.

"We must approach Saints like any other game; on paper we should win but we have to make sure we perform ourselves."

Wijtenburg's side will take on a **Northampton Saints** team without a win all season and will hope to extend Saints' 14-game barren run.

The basement side lost 7-0 at second-placed **Sevenoaks**, on Saturday, a result which saw the hosts keep the pressure on Wimbledon at the top of the league as they approach the business end of the season.

In the Conference's other fixtures, **St Albans** beat second-placed **Sevenoaks** 2-1 to leave the top three sides separated by just six points.

Meanwhile **Southgate's** 2-2 draw with **Harleston Magpies** edged them closer to **Chelmsford**, in seventh, thanks to a double from Caitlin Wales.

Chelmsford were thumped 5-0 by **Wimbledon**, just a day before the league leaders went down at **Cambridge City**.