

Shot down in Flames

MK Lightning fell further behind in the English Premier League title chase after losing 5-1 to Guildford Flames.

In a crucial meeting Guildford made sure they took advantage of a poor Lightning showing to move into joint first place with Bracknell Bees and five points clear of MK.

A dip in form has led to Lightning losing their last three games with two of those coming at home rink Planet Ice.

While Lightning continue to ice without Michael Wales (wrist) they were boosted by the return of Gary Clarke who has been on international duty with Great Britain.

But not even Clarke's reappearance could inspire Lightning to a much needed win as they fell three goals down with 14 minutes.

Ill discipline was to blame as Guildford capitalised on power play opportunities with David Savage firing in the first four minutes in before Jozef Kohut and Rick Plant extended the visitors' advantage.

The Lightning side were a shadow of the team that beat Guildford 7-0 in the cup back in October. In fact MK had only lost one of their five meetings this season prior to the weekends' game.

Two strikes from Milos Melicherik, including a short handed goal, effectively ended any chance of Lightning fighting back it was more a case of shutting shop to stop Guildford extending their lead.



Picture by Jez Tibbetts

When Toni Alasaarela hit Lightning's one and only goal nine minutes from time it was all a little too late and counted for nothing more than a consolation for Nick Poole's battered side.

With eight league games remaining Lightning face an uphill struggle if they

are to mount a real challenge for the domestic championship.

■ LIGHTNING travel to Swindon on Saturday for a 5.45pm face-off and on Sunday they travel to Slough for their second away fixture of the weekend. Face-off is at 6.30pm.