

Lightning show character

TWO battling matches saw MK Lightning get their league campaign off to a winning start, but they left it late in their game against Sheffield Scimitars to secure the victory.

A slow starting Lightning side were punished early in their first game as Rob Dowd squeezed the puck past net-minder Barry Hollyhead to give Sheffield the lead in the opening minute.

Within a minute Ross Bowers paired up well with Nick Poole to pull Lightning level and the game continued at a frantic pace as both teams exchanged goals but it was Sheffield who were leading 3-2 at the end of the first period.

Despite having plenty of power plays in the second period Lightning were unable to make an addition to the score.

It was the final period that had all the drama as Sheffield extended their lead to 4-2 and it looked like there was no way back for Lightning.

Yet the side kept up their chase with Michael 'Muzzy' Wales grabbing two goals to make honours even with five minutes remaining and in the dying moments Adam Radmall set up a swift move to Poole who allowed Gary Clarke to net the winner in a thrilling climax to the game.



Close call: The bench celebrates Gary Clarke's winner with just seven seconds left on the clock

Picture by
JEZ TIBBETTS

The second game did not provide the same excitement despite it being against defending champions Bracknell Bees.

Clarke opened the scoring for Lightning with ten minutes on the clock following early chances for both sides, despite the Bees stepping up their game, Lightning continued to lead at the break.

It took 35 minutes for the Bees to register their only goal of the evening with a missed pass being picked up by Kanka who fired his side back on level terms.

Again Lightning left it late to seal the win this time Bowers scored from close range to take the scores to 2-1 and were left to defend their score for the final five minutes to secure the win.

Seeing his side beat two strong opponents late in games impressed coach Poole, he said: "Both games were real tight affairs against very solid teams. Saturday's win was a real crowd pleaser and to come from behind in the final 20 minutes to win 5-4 shows character."