



MEN'S FUTSAL: Liverpool 4-4 Manchester

Late Harrison equaliser secures a point for the hosts

Liverpool's Men's Futsal team were held to a 4-4 draw on Sunday against Manchester in their opening Christie Cup match.

They started the game in sloppy fashion, with a spell of comfortable possession easily squandered under little pressure, leading to a Manchester corner.

Manchester's number 10 screwed a shot narrowly wide from that dead ball, before a free-kick given for a shirt pull allowed Manchester another attempt. This one was sliced well wide.

Kagiso Mello just overran the ball as he attempted to regain some control of the game that had begun with the visitors dominating, but the Manchester pressure continued.

They hit the post with a low, driven shot from the right-hand side of the penalty area that flicked off the outside of the opposite post and went out for a kick-in.

That was the wake-up call that Damon Shaw's side required. Danusz Pala crossed for Mello to head towards goal, but Manchester just about managed to scramble the ball clear.

At the other end, a Manchester pull-back from the by-line should have seen them take the lead, but the resulting shot went well wide.

Liverpool goalkeeper Talaz Alenezi bowled the ball out for Duc Anh Nguyen to chest down and volley wide, but then Moued Abbassi opened the scoring. From the edge of the area, he blasted a shot into the roof of the net, giving Liverpool the lead against the run of play.

Hamza Hachimi nearly doubled the lead immediately afterwards but the Manchester goalkeeper made a point-blank save. The attacker was rightly disappointed not to find the back of the net.

Just as it looked like Liverpool were warming to the task, Manchester equalised. Hachimi switched off and let his man run off him, and was punished for his error. He had only switched off once in the game, but that was enough for the scoreline to become 1-1.

Pala shot well over before Munir Ghailan did the same after a well-worked corner routine, but then Manchester went in front from a corner of their own. The goalscorer was left alone inside the penalty area and he tapped home unmarked.

On the stroke of half-time, Pala made it level again with a low shot, and at the break it was 2-2.

On 23 minutes, three minutes after the restart, a wonderful flick around the corner from Mohamed Hafez found the path of James Chan, who fired Liverpool in front.

As soon as Liverpool had finished celebrating, though, they had been pegged back to 3-3. Goalkeeper Alenezi should have done better with a shot that he could only parry to his left side, where a Manchester attacker had an open goal to shoot into – he could not miss.

Conceding so quickly after taking the lead, Liverpool seemed rattled for a few moments, with Hafez giving away a free-kick in a dangerous area for a poorly disguised shirt

pull. Fortunately for him, that foul came to nothing as the resulting kick went straight into the wall.



Abbassi shot from halfway and saw his effort go narrowly wide, before Alenezi made up for his earlier error by saving his team, who were exposed on a three versus two counter attack in favour of Manchester.

An own-goal from Hafez put Manchester 4-3 in the lead with just five minutes remaining, as his attempted block from a Manchester shot diverted the ball into the back of his own net. The original shot was heading wide and he was unfortunate that the block did not see the ball go the other side of the post and out for a corner.

Abbassi should have equalised when he went through one versus one with the goalkeeper, but he saw his shot saved. On the next attack, though, the goal did come, with Harrison driving Liverpool level.

In a frantic finish to the game, Pala could have won it for the hosts, before Harrison slotted a neat low cross across the face of goal, with no Liverpool player able to get a touch on it. Had anyone been able to stretch to reach it, any sort of touch would have been the winning goal.

In a hotly contested Christie Cup battle, the game ended 4-4, in what was probably a fair result for both sides, who had both squandered chances for more goals.

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