

A nearly full strength NP Rangers Women's Team travelled to Palmerston North to play a Federation Cup game against Taradale Women's 1st Team on a very wet Skoglund Park, surprisingly the ground itself was in reasonable condition and with 3 point control for the first time this season it gave our back four a chance to play a very effective offside trap.

The team went into this game as firm underdogs playing a side that is leading the Premier Division in the Hawkes Bay and in six games has only conceded 3 goals and has scored 30+, the girls have been training very well and turned up to this game in a great frame of mind, and the focus from the coach in the first half was to give Taradale no time on the ball and to not let them play football, to frustrate and to pressure. When we had the ball we were to play to our strengths, ball to feet pass and move, this the girls did and did so well that we dominated the first 30 minutes of the game leading to NP Rangers opening the scoring when from the back rangers played the ball firstly through to the midfield before a lovely through ball to right midfielder Jazz Lovell who played a great square ball to Tania Robbertsen on the edge of the 18 yard who struck it first time into the roof of the net 1 - 0 Rangers.

Taradale totally stunned by this tried to get back into the game and to Rangers credit they were not allowed to do so, unfortunately just before halftime a defensive lapse, the one and only one of the half let a very capable Taradale player through and into the penalty area where she beat a rapidly approaching Sheryl Brown in goal for Rangers for the second time this season, 1 - 1 and that was the score at halftime.

We knew Taradale would start the second half with venom and they didn't let us down, once again Rangers defence held true and the team battled well, the heavy ground and fitness started to take its toll on a few of the Rangers players and for the space of 15 minutes we started to let Taradale get more of the ball and to actually start playing the game, this they did with great effect and scored 2 very quick goals to go ahead 3 v 1 with approx 20 minutes left in the game.

Teams at this point can do one of two things 1) fold and get hammered or 2) pick themselves up and get back into the game, fortunately we did the latter and I thought again we dominated the last 15 minutes unlucky not to have a couple of goals ourselves and Millie O'Connor coming oh so close in the 92nd minute which would of left the score at 3 v 2 to Taradale probably a more realistic score line to the 3 v1 that it ended up.

The faces of the Taradale players at the end of the game showed to me that they were in a battle and one I don't think they expected from us, the smiles on our girls faces I think said it all in regards to how well we played under trying conditions, as a coach it makes you feel very happy to see things that the girls have been working on bought to a game of this importance, and with Moturoa around the corner I hope the great work continues.

I could not pick a Man of the Match, so gave it to the team, even when I brought Chanree on in the second half she made her presence felt on the field, a big thanks to raewyn Nairn for her commitment to the team to travel down and back for no game time at all.

Goal Scorer for NP Rangers: Tania Robbertsen

Team: Sheryl Brown (GK) Erina Brotherston, Kate Martin, Emma Bentley, Chantelle Broadhurst, Tania Robbertsen (C), Deb Whittle, Mille O'Connor, Jasmine Lovell, Emma Todd, Millie Clegg

Subs: Chanree Van der VestHuisen, Raewyn Nairn