

Alan Good

Ireland's men trounce Ukraine in Olympic hockey qualifier



Ireland 12 Ukraine 0

Ireland did their goal difference no harm at all as their forwards took Ukraine to the cleaners on day two of the FIH Electric Ireland Road to London Olympic qualifiers at Belfield today.

Having been denied a place in the final of the 2008 Olympic qualifier in New Zealand on goal difference - a single goal proving the divider - Paul Revington's men will be happy to have hit double figures against the tournament's lowest-ranked side.

As against Russia on Saturday, Ireland started slowly but Timmy Cockram diverted Paul Gleghorne's disguised sweep to the roof of the net on 14 minutes to open the floodgates.

That livened up a Belfield that had grown frustrated by a slow start, but Ireland then converted their first two penalty corners to put themselves out of sight by the 26th minute.

Eugene Magee nabbed both of them, first showing the skills he picked up as a hurler for Down in a previous life, half-volleying home after Conor Harte's drag-flick was saved by Iaroslav Hordey.

And the second was even better, a pre-rehearsed move which saw Harte switch the ball right for David Ames to stick-stop, and Magee rattled home a drag past the exposed Ukrainian netminder.

Ireland made it four near the 30-minute mark after a crash ball was redirected onto the post. John Jermyn recovered the rebound to calmly beat two men in the circle and square for Cockram to slam home.

And it was five just before half-time, when Mitch Darling tipped in at the second attempt off Sloan's cross from the right.

The second-half showed no let-up, with Darling converting after captain for the day John Jackson got to the endline, before Peter Caruth's attempted cross off a turnover was turned in by a Ukrainian defender.

Mikey Watt then grabbed two in jig-time, first-timing Chris Cargo's pass to the roof of the net before giving his marker twisted blood and firing home from the top of the circle.

Cockram completed his hat-trick and brought up double figures seven minutes from time, intercepting near halfway and running unopposed to the circle, reversing in off the far post.

And with Revington urging Ireland to keep the intensity up in the final minutes, Cargo reversed a beauty to the top corner before Jermyn collected his 73rd international goal seconds from time, batting in an upright backhand shot.

Having taken six points from their opening games as expected, Ireland will now face their first real test of the tournament when they take on top seeds Korea on Tuesday night (6pm).

IRELAND: David Harte (GK), Ronan Gormley, John Jackson (capt), Conor Harte, Paul Gleghorne; Ian Sloan, Andy McConnell, David Ames; Mitch Darling, Eugene Magee, Mikey Watt.

Rolling subs: John Jermyn, Chris Cargo, Stuart Loughrey, Peter Caruth, Timmy Cockram.

FIH Electric Ireland Road To London, Day 2

Ireland 12 (Timmy Cockram 3, Mitch Darling 2, Eugene Magee 2, Mikey Watt 2, Peter Caruth, Chris Cargo, John Jermyn) Ukraine 0

Malaysia 6 (Muhammad Amin 3, Hafifihafiz Hanafi, Muhammad Razie, Faizal Saari)
Russia 2 (Pavel Golubev 2)