

# Hampstead keep cool to stay eight points in front

Indian Gymkhana 1  
Hampstead 2

HAMPSTEAD maintained their eight-point lead at the top of English League division one with a professional performance in a generally ill-tempered game that saw six yellow cards at Indian Gymkhana.

"This was not an enjoyable game – the level of play degenerated as the match went on," said Hampstead's Rob Turner.

"To our credit, we played good hockey amidst the mayhem and were good value for the three points that push us closer to the finishing line."

Hampstead were also short several players through illness and unavailability. Lindsay Troy returned for the first time this season and keeper Tim Forte started his first League game in over two years.

Hampstead dominated the opening quarter, moving the ball quickly forward. But the home side scored against the run of play in the 14th minute when a shot from the top of the circle was deflected in off defender Andrew von Mayer, leaving Forte with no chance.

Hampstead stormed back and in the 17th minute a second Justin King short corner was deflected in off a defender's elbow. This was followed five minutes later by Mark Sully's debut goal for Hampstead with

a slap-push from the top of the circle that went through a sea of sticks and across the line.

The game now opened up and Mike Williamson began to find space on the Hampstead right and impressed with his collection and distribution. Gymkhana began to lose their discipline after the second goal and one of their players was yellow-carded.

Just before half-time, with the umpires losing patience, Matt Hetherington was suspended after colliding with an opponent.

It was much the same in the second half but the home side tried to make more of a game of it. Forte pulled off two excellent saves, one with a dive to tip the ball around a post.

Then, three Gymkhana players were suspended largely for dissent but Hampstead opted for ball retention rather than going for a third goal, especially as Gymkhana, not unsurprisingly, pulled their remaining men behind the ball.

The players already suspended were then joined by Hampstead's King as matters further deteriorated and the sin-bin area became overpopulated.

Hampstead: Forte; von Mayer, Boucher, King, Matthews; Sully, Singh, Williamson; Troy, Carolan, Hetherington. Subs: Turner, Hayes.