



DUBAI SANDSTORMS 6



DUBAI MIGHTY CAMELS 6

CAMELS SHOOT, JONES SAVES!

Goaltender Mathew Jones makes 58 saves in nail biter
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Dubai, It was the eagerly awaited monthly clash between the Junior Sandstorms, and the big boys of the Mighty Camels of Dubai. In the end, it was the Junior Sandstorms, the underdogs, who left the ice whooping in joy and punching the air in triumph.

If one was to look only at the shots taken by both teams, one would come to the conclusion that the Camels would have easily crushed the feeble Sandstorms. 64 shots for the Camels, and 20 for the Sandstorms. But alas, the Sandstorms goaltender Mathew Jones conjured up a sandstorm of his own, which had the Camels rubbing their eyes in disbelief hours after the game was concluded.

The Canadian goaltender came up with unarguably the performance of the year, making a jaw dropping 58 saves with a save percentage of 90.25%.

Despite starting with only four men on the ice, the Camels opened the scoring through Greg Fitzpatrick, when they worked the puck around the goal and found an opening. Their lead did not last long though, as David Dokakis and Kirsty Evans combined to set up Mohamed in front of the net for an equalizer. Drew Gibson put the Sandstorms ahead when he poked the puck past the Camels goaltender, and suddenly the men were looking mortal (last months encounter was a 9-2 thrashing in favor of the Camels).

The Camels struck back with a double blow from Wayne Mahan, who capitalized on some weak defense and poor clearing from the Sandstorms to put his team ahead by two. A notable absentee from the Sandstorms lineup was the big defenseman Diego Kleckner. It seemed as though they would dearly miss his presence against a strong men's roster.

The Camels kept up a relentless attack on the Sandstorms goal. They passed the puck around as if it were on a string, and took shot after shot, only to see them being denied by Jones.

It was as if Jones glove was a magnet for the puck, and his pads seemed to be everywhere. His lightning quick reflexes, mixed with his superior anticipation of the puck, and ability to be at the right place at the right time, kept the Camels at bay. By the middle of the second period, Jones was seeing the puck as if it were a brightly colored beach ball.

At 12:17 of the second period, the Sandstorms got on level terms with a counter attack from Drew Gibson and David Dokakis

But shortly after, the Camels got one by Jones courtesy of a rebound, and then increased their lead to two with a beautiful play that left Jones with no chance whatsoever. With the score at 5-3, it looked as if a replay of last month's result was on the cards. The Sandstorms were being

intimidated by the sheer size of the Camels, "They're so huge," remarked Krirsty Evans. "They seem to be everywhere."

The Camels goaltender, Stephen Doucette, was making some dandy saves of his own. He denied David Dokakis twice off two breakaways, and then made a quick pad save off Drew Gibson in the second period.

With the game slowly slipping away from the Sandstorms, David Dokakis kept the Sandstorms hopes alive when he received a behind the back pass from Mohamed, and finished superbly past the Camels net minder. Drew then leveled it for the Sandstorms with a quality finish, perfectly set up by Eric Zurcher and Jason Eid.

With the score at five a piece and not too long to play, the pressure was starting to tell on the Sandstorms. A few defensive turnovers and sloppy clearances provided the Camels with some good opportunities, but Jones was there to save the day.

Finally with 7:36 remaining in the game, Wayne Maher got one by Jones, pouncing on a rebound to put the Camels ahead by one. With time running out, and the Camels switched firmly on defensive mode, the Sandstorms needed a miracle to save the game.

With forty seconds left, Mohamed got by the Camels defense and skated into the slot, before passing the puck to David Dokakis in front of the net. Dokakis had all the time in the world from six feet out, and his snapshot found the top left corner of the goal with pinpoint accuracy. The goal came with half a minute left to play, and sent the Sandstorm fans into ecstasy.

Plenty of positives can be taken out from the game by the Sandstorms apart from the "Matt Jones Show." They passed the puck around more and were skating more freely.

"We didn't bunch around the puck as much as we did last time, and passed it around really well," said Sandstorms coach Thierry VanDurme after the game.

It was a tight game, which see-sawed back and forth and saw some superb goaltending from both teams, mixed with exciting offensive plays. The Sandstorms owe a lot to their net minder, and one couldn't help but think that the result would have been slightly different had Jones not been on the top of his game.

Mohamed Suleman (a.k.a. Mohamed Mohamed)