

# Otter Valley holds off Rutland

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Otter Valley's Sydney Gallo, left, moves the ball forward as Rutland's Arikka Patorti, right, comes to defend during Thursday's game in Brandon.





Otter Valley's Alice Keith, left, controls a ball on the sidelines as a Rutland defender comes on during Thursday's game in Brandon.

BRANDON — For a Rutland field hockey team low on roster numbers and experience, marked improvement is the goal every time the Ravens take the field.

Thursday's 2-1 loss to rival Otter Valley was by no means perfect, but it was a step forward from Rutland's first outing.

"This is our second game and we definitely improved from last week," said Ravens coach Karen Poljacik. "I felt that we had the ball in the offensive end more than we did before. We got a goal, which is much improvement. We can take some positives away from here."

Rutland got its lone goal of the game early in the fourth quarter. The Ravens had been held without a penalty corner throughout the second and third quarters, but when they got one in the fourth, they took advantage.

Junior midfielder Jaryn Mazzariello-Peer did the honors of putting it in the back of the cage.

It was a positive in a game that was mostly controlled by the Otters. Otter Valley was a little slow out of the gate, but once it got going, its attack was relentless.

“I don’t know if they have too much energy going into the first quarter and they need to work it out, but they definitely looked better after the first quarter and settled in,” said Otter Valley coach Jodie Keith.

The Otters notched the game’s first tally with nine seconds left in the first quarter when junior Ryleigh LaPorte put one home from in front of the cage. Senior captain Riley Keith assisted on the play.

Otter Valley used that momentum and took it to a whole different level at the start of the second.

The Otters got their second and final goal with 13:51 to play in the second quarter. Rutland was called for a defensive penalty around the goal, allowing for an Otter Valley penalty shot.

Riley Keith took the shot and slotted it into the upper netting out of Rutland goalie Emma Cosgrove’s reach.

The Otters kept on pressing forward, getting eight penalty corners in the second quarter alone, keeping the ball in the attacking end for much of the second and third quarters.

Jodie Keith noted how much experience her offensive players have and how that helps the Otters when they push forward.

“We have a really strong offensive line,” Coach Keith said. “They’re two seniors and two juniors, so they’ve played together a long time. They play very well together.

“Our two midfielders are a junior and a senior and they also have played together a long time. It’s a great group on that offensive end of the field.”

The Otters heavily outshot Rutland, so keeping the deficit to one was a big positive for the Ravens.

Cosgrove was busy all game long and senior defender Elizabeth Franzoni captained the backs to contain a relentless OV attack.

“Emma does a great job,” Poljacik said. “Elizabeth Franzoni did a great job as our fullback. I’m pleased. It’s an improvement from last time.”

Rutland (0-2) has another challenge on Saturday, hosting perennial championship contender Bellows Falls.

Otter Valley (3-0) hosts Windsor on Monday.

