Match report: Wasps Netball 68 – 43 Surrey Storm

Wasps Netball started their season in style with a dominant 68-43 win against Surrey Storm at the Ricoh Arena.

A capacity crowd packed the Ericsson Indoor Arena to see the reigning champions begin their Vitality Netball Superleague title defence.

Tamsin Greenway's team led throughout the game and pulled away from the visitors in the second quarter, building a big advantage which eventually led to an impressive opening result.

Wasps' netball director was generally happy with the opening night display, and in particular with the contribution of new signing Jade Clarke.

"It was a great start, you could tell we were ready for this and I knew that if we played like we can, we'd get a big win," Greenway said.

"There were a few silly errors at the start, but as the game went on you could see our players started to believe in each other and that's a testament to our team.

"Pressure only comes from what you put on yourself; I'm quite happy this team can handle being the side to beat as they showed in this game.

"Jade was outstanding today. She is a great signing for us - the quality she brings is clear to see.

"It's a dream start, but it's a long journey and we know there will lots of twists and turns along the way."

The fixture came too soon for a second new signing, Renske Stoltz, but black-and-gold fans did get the chance to see England centre Clarke in action for their club for the first time.

Rachel Dunn opened the scoring for the hosts who looked a step quicker in the opening quarter, with goal keeper Sam May enjoying a strong start and applying constant pressure to Storm goal-shooter Sigi Burger.

The home side built their advantage through the first quarter, and led by nine going into the second period.

Wasps' talented 19-year-old goal shooter George Fisher found her touch during his spell, linking up well with Dunn and Natalie Haythornthwaite.

Meanwhile, Storm struggled to find their rhythm at the other end, which meant Greenway's team held a substantial 35-19 advantage at the end of the first half.

The second half was marked by the Superleague return of Sophia Candappa, who appeared for the first time since suffering an ACL injury against Storm in ten months ago.

Home shooter Fisher battled with Storm goal-keeper Lorraine Kowalewska during the third quarter, with the Storm player repeatedly being warned for contact.

And Kowalewska was unable to halt Fisher's shooting streak, as she helped Wasps take a 22-point lead into the final quarter.

Greenway rung the changes during the final quarter, and took the opportunity to bring herself onto the court as Wasps coasted to a 68-43 win.

Wasps Netball's next home fixture sees Sirens visit on Thursday February 22 (7.00pm centre-pass).

Tickets for Wasps Netball vs Sirens on February 22 are available from from www.waspsnetball.co.uk/tickets.

Attendance: 1,150

Player of the match: Sam May

Q1: 17-8
Q2: 35-19
Q3: 52-30
Q4: 68-43

Wasps starting seven: GK Sam May; GD Hannah Reid; WD Amy Flanagan; C Jade Clarke; WA Natalie Haythornthwaite; GA Rachel Dunn; GS George Fisher

Used Substitutes: Fran Williams (GD) Sophia Candappa (WA) Greenway (GD)

Surrey Storm starting seven: GK Jo Trip; GD Jade Forbes-Wattley; WD Katy Holland; C Yasmin Parsons; WA Georgia Lees; GA Katie Harris; GS Sigi Burger

Used substitutes: Rhea Dixon (GA) Jade Forbe-Wattley (GD)