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by SEAN FARRELL

Templeogue United 7
Mount Merrion 0

■ NDSL METRO UNDER-17 GROUP 2

A FANTASTIC four-goal display from Zoe Bailey helped Templeogue United claim their first win of the season over Mount Merrion in Tymon North on Sunday.

United had match-winning performances all over the park with midfielders Katie Mahon and Sarah-Jane Hecker excelling early on.

Bailey too was outstanding from the off and a hat-trick from her, along with expert finishes from twins Laura and Niamh Leacy had the hosts leading comfortably at half time.

To their credit, the visitors kept working through the icy second half conditions but ultimately could not force a breakthrough.

On the right wing, Mahon's barnstorming run in the opening minutes ensured United didn't have to wait long to open the scoring.

The winger sprinted past defender Carrie Daymar and hit a low drive across goal where Bailey was throwing herself into a sliding finish.

Niamh Leacy doubled the lead in the 10th minute after capitalising on a misplaced goal kick.

Leacy advanced on goal and confidently turned down the call from Kayleigh Fox and placed her shot inside Rhiannon O'Connor's near post.

With Hecker adding finesse and controlled possession in midfield it was difficult for the white jerseys to escape.



OFF THE MARK: Templeogue United and (below) Mount Merrion



escape.

Service

Captain Lauren Duffy cut a lone figure up front at times as her teammates could not give her any service.

Katie Mullen led the way for Mount Merrion, though the midfielder was too often left dropping back to help her overworked back four.

In the 20th minute Bailey showed further clues of her great skill, selling a dummy inside the box to Caoimhe Fitzgerald before coolly stroking home.

Fitzgerald would soon redeem herself with a brilliant intervention to prevent a certain goal from Fox who looked to be in.

The chances kept coming for the home side but they were thwarted by O'Connor's acrobatic saves.

First, Hecker was the one frustrated after shooting from distance and soon it was Bailey, denied a rapid fire hat-trick after an impressive spin and firm volley which had the keeper at full stretch.

However, there was nothing O'Connor could do about the fourth goal.

From the right, Mahon delivered a pinpoint corner to the near post.

Laura Leacy was arriving at pace, leapt and guided her first time volley into the top corner with the inside of her right foot.

Number five arrived on the stroke of half time.

Bailey, proving she is much more than just an expert goal-poacher received a pass from Sinead O'Loughlin, drib-

IT'S ZOE EASY FOR UNITED!

Templeogue rocket seven past Merrion

bled at the defence and smashed a 20 yard bolt into the roof of the net.

With a slope on the pitch and blinding winter sunlight in their eyes in the first half Merrion will have hoped for better progress in the second half.

Another boost came with Carey Wilson moving outfield in place of Hecker who went between the sticks.

Unfortunately the lethal Bailey was still in full flow and the striker began the half bringing up the half dozen.

Good work on the left flank from Kelsey Hurley brought United back into opposition territory.

She linked with Fox who fed Bailey; there could be

only one result and that was a perfectly-placed finish past O'Connor into the corner.

Duffy managed to see more of the ball as the sun began to set behind her goal.

Dropped

She dropped into midfield and, along with Megan Byrne, gave her side some extra grip in the engine room.

Up front for Mount Merrion Fiona McGuire was leading the line to the best of her ability and her speed and skill ensured there would be no slacking off for the Templeogue defence.

Laura Leacy was sweeping up any signs of danger

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and after launching a counter attack, Mounties' defender Louise McGraine was outnumbered four to one and did brilliantly to stop Sinead McCullagh from scoring.

All that was missing from Templeogue winger Sinead O'Loughlin's performance was a goal, however she did force a magnificent seventh with 15 minutes on the clock.

After incessant pressure from the home side, O'Loughlin flashed a cross low across goal.

Fox was waiting at the back stick for an easy finish but like all good defenders, McGraine got in the way but was unfortunate to divert into her own net.

The effort of Fitzgerald at centre back was also commendable, she continued to shout and organise her defence in spite of the score-line, a great attitude.

At the other end, Mount Merrion came close to a consolation goal after Mullen's chipped pass set Duffy on the run.

Emma Bailey and Rianne Rowan were on hand to extinguish the danger and maintain Templeogue's clean sheet.

TEMPLEOGUE UNITED: Carey Wilson, Emma Bailey, Kayleigh Fox, Laura Leacy, Katie Mahon, Niamh Leacy, Sinead McCullagh, Sinead O'Loughlin, Kelsey Hurley, Rianne Rowan, Zoe Bailey, Sarah-Jane Hecker.
MOUNT MERRION: Rhiannon O'Connor, Louise McGraine, Carrie Daymar, Marika Anderson, Caoimhe Fitzgerald, Ryley Durkin, Megan Byrne, Katie Mullen, Lauren Duffy, Fiona McGuire, Leah Cullen, Lota Okeke, Clare McKenna, Renad Saleh.