

FA Inter League Cup – 1st Round Saturday 28th September 2019

AFC vs Essex Olympian League

The AFC started their season's campaign having scrutinised every FA rule and made sure that this time no antiquated rules would scupper our chances of lifting the trophy we were so unfairly robbed of two years ago.

The crowd were boosted by the attendance of AFA Officers Mike Brown & David Dunn plus numerous AFC Executive members and Mick Kelly of Old Woodhouseians plus at least 20 family & friends of the players. The game was once again hosted at Uxbridge FC and an excellent playing surface was the first good sign after the weeks deluge. As ever Uxbridge were excellent hosts.

The game kicked off and the first 10 minutes or so were even with perhaps the EOL having the slight advantage of possession. After 10 minutes a great move saw Ryan Bright (Meadonians) through on goal only for the referee to blow up and not allow what was an obvious goal scoring advantage to award a free kick 20 yards further back – a poor decision and nothing came of the free kick. The AFC continued to press and once again Ryan Bright went close having his shot blocked for a corner.

All the good work by the AFC was unfortunately lost when in the 19th minute a mistake by Harry Wakeford (Suttonians) on the edge of the AFC box, was pounced on by the best player on the pitch the EOL No9 Suleyman Zudha, to fire a shot low into the corner of Henry Warnes' net. **0-1**. The AFC immediately went on the attack only to waste another glorious chance following a one on one breakaway. However the pressure being exerted by the nimble AFC front three would soon pay dividends and the AFC star man Ryan Bright was soon set up once again, this time there was no erring as his drilled low shot found the bottom corner . **1-1**

The AFC thought they had gained a 2-1 lead after a fine finish, but VAR was not needed, as the correct offside decision was flagged by the Assistant Referee to cancel out the strike. Ryan Bright was getting targeted by the opposition and two opposition players quickly followed each other into the referee's notebook for cynical tackles. This seemed to cause EOL to retreat and a further excellent move saw Tom Coulter (HAC) fire narrowly over . Just before half time the AFC escaped when the dangerous Zudha smashed a shot against the crossbar, a huge sigh of relief was heard from all the AFC supporters.

HALF – TIME.

Once again the AFC started the half the stronger team and a great shot by Liam Hawkins (Dorkinians) was saved by the EOL keeper at the expense of a corner. The corner gave Liam another glorious opportunity but he fired his shot narrowly over – were these missed chances going to haunt the AFC later, we shall see.

The AFC almost go behind again as the excellent Zudha smashes a long range shot against the AFC cross bar and we escape, just. The AFC continue to press and following a sweeping end to end move George Procter (Suttonians) fires over when in a great position to score. Again the pressure mounts and in the 63rd minute a wonder 40 yard cross field pass from Josh Higgins (Meadonians) lands at the feet of Liam Hawkins who smashes it into the net on the volley whilst in full running mode – what a goal – the crowd erupt **2-1**.

This goal seemed to deflate the EOL players and the AFC pushed them hard and following a corner the EOL concede a penalty with the most blatant push on an AFC forward in the 6 yard box, penalty !!, no complaints

from anyone so up steps Ryan Bright to seal the victory.....a weak kick is easily saved by the EOL keeper. Would that be another turning point, again the crowd became increasingly nervous.

Understandably EOL throw extra men forward, spurred on by not going 3-1 down , they make their three changes within the next 10 minutes to try and reinforce their forwards speed, it works as Henry Warne pulls off wonder save after wonder save, to thwart what looked like an equaliser. In making the third or fourth flying stop he got injured and what was to be a 10 minute hold up whilst he received treatment. Copious amounts of stoppage time were added and Warne had to be spared taking goal kicks and was excellent shepherded through the remaining minutes, whilst in obvious discomfort, by a tiring but solid back four marshalled by the towering skipper Chris North or Old Wokingians. The final action once again saw Zudha fire inches wide the final whistle was blown and we had held on, just, to win 2-1 and now face The Jersey Combination League in Rd2 , to be played sometime in November, again hopefully at Uxbridge FC. Well done the AFC and away we go again!!

Players

Henry Warne (GK) Dorkinians
Cameron McGovern Old Hamptonians
Harry Wakeford Old Suttonians
Charlie Cain Old Meadonians
Chris North Old Wokingians (Capt)
Ross Fleming Old Wokingians
George Proctor Old Suttonians
Josh Higgins Old Meadonians
Tom Coulter HAC
Liam Hawkins Dorkinians
Ryan Bright Old Meadonians
Subs : -
Adam Holmes HAC
Sam Edis Old Wokingians
Craig Jones Dorkinians
Charles Woodman Dorkinians

Manager Luke Graham
Asst Manager Ali McCombe
Physio/Coach Jack Costello

I
Ian Andrews
AFC Secretary 29th sept 2019