

Sunday 18th September 2005

London F.A. Sunday Intermediate Cup First Round Match at Hazelwood Sports Ground

EDMONTON ROVERS	13	A SMALL WORLD	1	HT 9-1
Ahmed (5, 13, 32 mins.), Nxumalo (14, 37 mins.), Ellerker (18, 83 mins.), Murphy (24 mins.), Woolston (40, 41 mins.), S.Cokell (46 mins.), Speller (75, 81 mins.)		Mureson (36 mins.)		

EDMONTON ROVERS LINE-UP (with Marks out of 10): Darryl JOHNSON (GK) (6); Colin BESTER (7), Tony SPELLER (7½), Paul WOOLSTON (7½), Terry MOORE (7); Foyso! AHMED (8), Paul ELLERKER (7½), Gary COKELL (7), Peter MURPHY (7½); Vernon 'Kizza' NXUMALO (7½); Steve COKELL (7½) **Subs.:** Daniel GEORGE (7), Ritchie COPUES (7), Robin PRYKE (7), Conor McGOVERN (Not Used), Tom DELL (Not Used)

A SMALL WORLD'S LINE-UP: Jamie WRIGHT (GK); Ade DANIA, Filip RIDEAU, Ibrahim CLARK, Kamir MALEKI; Igor DEGITAREV, Chris HUNTER, William AITKEN, Nikolai VAN LOEPER; Vince GIRDWOOD, Alvin MURESON **Sub.:** Tom KORN

Referee: Bob CHISHOLM

Weather Conditions: Cool & Cloudy

Attendance: 15



Factual Report (by Laurence Hughes): 'Trainspotter' that I am, I always like to find out something about our opponents in London F.A. Cup competitions before we play them, but when we received the draw for *this* round, it took quite a while to find out who 'A Small World' were and what League they played in, as nothing could be found using Google Search and they were not in last season's London F.A. handbook either. As it turned out, they were a newly-formed club this season in Division One of the two-Division [West End A.F.A. Sunday \(A.M.\) League](#), Division One actually being the bottom Division in that League, which is obviously vastly inferior to

the seven-Division Mercury Waltham Sunday League in which we play/struggle. It was therefore strange that the London F.A. (or their League ?) should have entered them in the London F.A. Sunday *Intermediate* Cup instead of the Sunday *Junior* Cup then, as the Intermediate Cup is supposed to be for Premier Division sides or Division One teams from *stronger* Leagues like our own. In fact when A Small World's Player-Secretary/Manager Vince Girdwood phoned up to confirm arrangements beforehand, he was obviously worried when he found out how organised we were (in comparison), and he therefore seemed to suspect his side would end up on the wrong end of such a scoreline in what was their first-ever match. I therefore had a job persuading him that we had only won once in our last 45 matches, but thankfully it looked as if that dismal record actually did the trick and encouraged them to turn up (all the way from their base in Kensington) when they may well have been tempted to pull out of the Competition and concede the match, especially as their sponsored kit had not turned up in time and they would have to borrow our Orange & Black spare kit instead. (They were actually going to play wearing assorted t-shirts before I told them the London F.A. would fine them for not having numbered shirts !)

At least they all arrived at (and *found*) Hazelwood well before the kick-off though, unlike most teams who we get drawn at Home to in the London Cup competitions, and indeed they even helped to put one of the nets up...albeit leaving massive gaps in it for the ball to run straight



through when a goal was scored. Once the game got underway though, it soon became obvious that the majority of their players had only ever played 'jumpers for goalposts' football before and would have little teamwork and organisation. In fact the West End A.F.A. League in which they play actually seems to be a specific League for 'international students' (run by a Stuart Ellerker funnily enough, although apparently he is no relation to our own Paul and Marco), and A Small World certainly had numerous different nationalities in their line-up, although none of them were remotely approaching professional quality or even the standard that some of our own players had played in on Saturdays

in the past. As it happened, we were fielding a 'weakish' side ourselves with skipper Stuart Dorward attending a Wedding in Yorkshire, Derek Dorward working (again) and Conor McGovern and Robin Pryke only named as substitutes due to jet-lag and injuries respectively. However, two draws against good opposition in our first two matches (when we fielded a similar side to this) had given us plenty of confidence despite us going for so long without a win, and when Foyso Ahmed put us ahead after only five minutes with a close-range volley from Vernon 'Kizza' Nxumalo's cross, the floodgates duly opened...not unexpectedly.

Foyso then scored again after 13 minutes with another good volley after an excellent move involving Tony Speller, 'Kizza' and Steve Cokell (which turned out to be 'probably' our best goal of the game ?), before 'Kizza' made it 3-0 in the 14th minute after running onto a good through ball from Paul Ellerker. Ellerker then produced a good finish himself to make it 4-0 in the 18th minute...and then Conor McGovern turned up ! McGovern had just got back from a holiday in the U.S.A. and had missed our first two matches, so he was desperate for a game, even though he had only just stepped off a plane. In fact even more so when he saw A Small World's centre-half and goalkeeper both wearing glasses, their 20-stone left-back gasping for breath, and their substitute/Club linesman flagging for offside from a throw-in. With Julien Nurse's [All-Time Club Top Goalscorer](#) record in sight, McGovern would have undoubtedly seen this as a good opportunity to reach that target a bit more quickly, but Manager Trevor Hughes was happy with the excellent three-touch pass and move football we had been showing so far in this match and didn't want to bring anybody on who might have been tempted to get a bit greedy. In addition to that, Daniel George, Ritchie Copues and Robin Pryke all deserved a run-out instead, especially against this sort of opposition, as Dan and Ritchie had been patiently waiting their turn in recent weeks and Robin needed 30 minutes or so as a fitness test.

Meanwhile, Peter Murphy soon added a 5th in the 24th minute by firing in a loose ball in the area after some comical defensive blunders, and then Terry Moore went on a good run to set up Foyso Ahmed for his hat-trick in the 32nd minute to put us 6-0 up. However, A Small World then made us realise that they had stuck all their worst players in defence (and in goal ?) and their best players in attack when the ball suddenly got through to forward Alvin Mureson in the 36th minute who turned both Tony Speller and Paul Woolston inside out before squeezing the ball past a combination of Terry Moore and Darryl Johnson and into the bottom corner. That made it 6-1 and our many supporters on the touchline warmly applauded a goal which was better than any we had scored so far !

However, we were still playing well ourselves, and as we did when we *last* played weak opposition such as this (a 12-1 win against A.F.C. Breda way back in 1994 !), we continued to pass the ball around with nobody being greedy whatsoever. That saw 'Kizza' make it 7-1 in the 37th minute and then Paul Woolston came up to take advantage of the fact that A Small World's defenders had never headed a ball in their life before (because they were either wearing glasses or had only played with jumpers for goalposts ?), 'Wooly' easily heading in from a free-kick in the 40th minute and a corner a minute later to give us a 9-1 lead at Half-Time. Not that Manager Trevor Hughes really saw much of the First Half because he was in deep conversation with some Ukrainian relatives of one of A Small World's players. (Was this some sort of secret ploy to put us off our game !?).

The First Half certainly brought back memories of that A.F.C. Breda match though (when one of their players sliced a penalty off for a throw-in !), and in this match one of the funniest incidents was when A Small World player went down injured and we shouted out for their keeper to clear the ball out of play for a throw-in towards the half-way line (normal football etiquette these days). However, he then went and deliberately kicked it off for a *corner* to us *instead*, and it needed our players to go up to him to explain the situation...while our supporters were in hysterics on the touchline.

We then brought on Ritchie Copues and Daniel George at Half-Time for Colin Bester and Terry Moore, neither of whom were really 'needed' in defence in a match like this, but A Small World also made changes at Half-Time by switching some of their better players into defence and taking off their left-back Kamir Maleki, who had been given a torrid time by the ever-improving Foyso Ahmed in the First Half.

They also started putting themselves about a bit with a few crunching challenges. Nothing malicious, but one of their players Filip Rideau seemed to hurt himself in doing so and wandered off towards the touchline to take over the flag from the already substituted Kamir Maleki, who then came back on while the ball was in play...until Referee Bob Chisholm spotted what was happening and went over to tell them that 'roll-on, roll-off' substitutions are not allowed in competitive F.A. registered 11-a-side football !

With Rideau not fit enough to continue, that saw them down to 10 men for the rest of the match, but Steve Cokell had already made it 10-1 with a 'shot ?' from near the corner flag which keeper Jamie Wright thought was going wide but comically let it go through a 6-inch gap at his near post and into the net !

Having 'strengthened' their defence for the Second Half, that made it even more boring for our own keeper Darryl Johnson, who had absolutely nothing to do...which was just as well, as he turned up for this match looking like Rudolph the red-nosed reindeer following his 'work office party' the night before and he was actually captured on video yawning at one stage.

(Unfortunately, I couldn't capture him on video when he was apparently lying asleep in his six-yard box during the Second Half because the ball was constantly in play in the opposing Penalty Area).

With half-an-hour to go, Robin Pryke was brought on after suffering horrendous injury problems for the last three years, and this was an ideal match for him to test his fitness. The good news was that he came through unscathed and hopefully it will be like signing a quality new player.

Indeed Robin spent most of the time he was on the pitch joining in the attack rather than playing in defence, but he was one of numerous players who just couldn't finish in the Second Half with countless shots going straight at keeper Wright, especially from Foyso Ahmed, whose eventual eleven shots on target and four off target must be some sort of record for the club !

In fact Wright actually started making a number of 'blinding' saves at one stage and it was an amazing transformation from his performance in the First Half...unless they changed their keeper at Half-Time as well ?

The pressure eventually told late on though, and Tony Speller added an 11th and a 12th in the 75th and 81st minutes with a solo effort through a tired defence and a rebound after keeper Wright had saved a shot from 'Kizza', but Wright certainly spoiled his good work in the Second Half by letting Paul Ellerker's long-range shot slip through his hands in the 83rd minute to make it 13-1, but that was how it eventually finished despite the urgings from Colin Bester on the touchline for 'only another three, lads' to break our Club Record of 15-1...which had stood for 25 years.

In fact this turned out to be our biggest win in any competition *since* then, our biggest ever win in London F.A. Sunday Cup competitions, and our First Team's first win in our last 13 matches, so it was a good day all round for breaking records.

Fair play to A Small World though. Myself and Trevor Hughes were around when we lost our first competitive match 29-0...and several others in the following three seasons by scorelines which were almost as bad. We had players storm off the pitch in some of those games because of the results, and we nearly folded up on several occasions. From what we saw in this match, they will not do that, but they will obviously have to hope that there are other teams in their League who are of similar ability to them.

Meanwhile, we march on...and it's great to get past the First Round in a Cup Competition for once, although we certainly got the luck of the draw this time !



'Murf's Alternative Report !!: It's a small world is an oft quoted adage, one that conjures thoughts of bumping into familiar faces in unexpected places. But not

one of encountering a rag-tag and bobtail collection of Sunday footballers from far off West London. Nevertheless it came to pass, on Sunday last, that Rovers were pitched against an assortment of kebab ridden bellies and Adrian Mole look-alikes in the first round of the London Intermediate Cup.

Early pointers to the quality of opposition were less written in the stars, more in their lack of kit. The away team thus tested the elasticity of Rovers away kit, some, particularly the left back, to Johnny Vegas style proportions. So, while Small World may have looked well turned out in donning Rovers' threads, all it did was prove another old adage. Appearances can be deceptive. Furthermore the visitors' image as a credible footballing force was not improved by the spectacle of not one but two of their number turning out in spectacles, the first time this correspondent has witnessed such a sight outside a school playground, Edgar Davids excepting.

The whole sorry scene prompted a pre-match dressing room disagreement between Manager Hughes and Captain Woolston. The former's sentiments went along the lines of "if we can't beat this lot", the latter's "I don't like (complacent) talk like that". However, the early exchanges confirmed both this as Small World's first ever game and Manager Hughes's instincts as correct. But Cap'n Woolly wasn't wrong either – a team boasting just one win in 45 has no room for complacency.

Rovers took the lead on 5 minutes through Foysol Ahmed and, by half-time, it was a match winning 9-1 in the home side's favour. Small World's consolation came via a fine individual effort, midfielder Mureson weaving his way through the Rovers defence, veritably corkscrewing Tony Speller on the way, before steering the ball into

Darryl Johnson's bottom left corner. It was to prove the only moment Johnson, who'd borrowed Ricky Tomlinson's hooter for the day, would lay glove upon ball. Indeed, on a colder day, the 'keeper could well have reprised Jack Nicholson's final scene in *The Shining*, so redundant was he. Half-time saw Manager Hughes give run-outs to Messrs George and Copues, the latter deserving special mention for uncomplainingly spending the last two Sundays practising his semaphore. The pair slotted effortlessly into the full-back positions. Meanwhile Small World's substitution was nowhere as smooth, the rotund left back being admonished early doors for not zipping his track top. The ref paused the game while the said left back, now walking the line, tested YKK's manufacturing standards to the limit. It was a close call – a bit like zipping the missus's holiday suitcase - but he made it in the end.

Shortly into the second period Steve Cokell made it 10-1 with a finely taken effort from an acute angle, one that Adrian Mole's lanky elder brother between the sticks dismissed with toothy disdain until it found the net. This presaged another episode which belied Small World's footballing naivety. The portly right back, all 6 foot plus and brewer's goitre, went down with something resembling cramp and made his way over to our friend, the flag carrying ex-left back. Without so much as a blink of the eye, the latter began to strip off ready to rejoin the fray. All around looked on with incredulity even, momentarily, referee Chisholm before he regained his composure to inform the visitors that rolling, or more to the point, roly-poly subs are not allowed this side of veteran's football. With a resigned shrug one retained the flag while the other flattened a patch of grass in nursing his injury.

Rovers' second half football continued in the same vein as the first, a display of fine passing and movement despite the temptation to run with the ball in the face of weak opposition and a commanding lead. That said, the potential avalanche of goals did not materialise thanks in the main to some wasteful finishing.

At half-time Foysol Ahmed was reminded that he was within striking distance of Lexton Harrison's one match individual scoring record and perhaps it was this that saw him arrowing shot after shot at the Small World 'keeper, even when he was stood way out of position. But Ahmed was not the only culprit, far from it, and the Small World 'keeper ended up with a shots saved tally far in excess of that which he deserved. Indeed, at times, he was just like that lad in the Capri-Sun advert.

By full-time the score line read 13-1. There was a hat-trick for Ahmed, singles for Murf and Steve Cokell, and doubles for Nxumalo, Ellerker, Speller and Woolston. Indeed the skipper could so nearly have recorded a hat-trick had a long range free-kick found the net but, as a passing Tarquin so rightly opined, "you'd have to be something special to score from there".

In the final analysis Small World should be congratulated on trying to play football throughout even if this did involve a fair amount of dribbling round in circles, especially direct from kick-off. The good news, therefore, is they got plenty of practise, the bad they discovered it goes absolutely bloody nowhere.

For Rovers the win was welcome, well overdue and will do nothing to harm their confidence.

Their unbeaten start to the season continues and the margin of victory was comfortable though Mark Howley, when asked if he'd enjoyed what he'd seen, wasn't exactly bowled over. "I'd have

preferred it if it was a tougher game," the ex-manager of the winless 2004-5 Reserves side remarked. It just goes to prove yet another old adage. You can't please all of the people all of the time.