

Sunday 19th October 2003

Mercury Waltham Sunday League Premier Division Match at Goldsdown Road

BRIMSDOWN ROVERS	3	EDMONTON ROVERS	1	HT 1-1
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Saunders (45, 49 mins.),
Wingrove (79 mins.)

Dickinson (Own Goal) (7 mins.)

Brimsdown Rovers Line-Up Dave FINCH; John EXCELL, Dave ZINZAN, Jim DICKINSON, Ben COTTERELL; Luke COLLINS, Brian BOEHMER, Jamie MARSTON, Billy WINGROVE; Daniel SAUNDERS, Mark ULATOWSKI **Subs.:** None

Edmonton Rovers Line-Up (with Marks out of 10): Darryl JOHNSON (GK) (7); Tony SPELLER (6), Stuart DORWARD (7½), Robin PRYKE (7), Eric IBEKWEM (6½); Daniel FRASI (6), Marco ELLERKER (6½), Conor McGOVERN (6½), Derek DORWARD (7); Lexton HARRISON (7), Steve COKELL (6½) **Subs:** None !

Referee: Peter JAGO

Weather Conditions: Sunny, but with Cold
Strong Wind

Attendance: 28



Report: Our run of really tough matches against quality opposition continued, but once again we had nothing like a full-strength side available and ultimately paid the price with another defeat. Our problems started in the days leading up to this match when key players Peter Sutton (on Friday) and then Paul Woolston (on Saturday) both confirmed that they would not recover from injury in time to even be named as substitutes and then things became even worse on the morning of the match when Steve Beasley phoned up to say he had flu (or some other sort of illness ?), John Beasley pulled out of his initial plan to help us out for the day when he had to take his cat to the vet...I think he said it had been run over, so at least it was an emergency, Leon Mc,Kenzie-Mc,Kay 'overslept' and then found out the trains from his new home in Cheshunt ran only once an hour on a Sunday...and he had just missed one ! That meant he didn't turn up at all because he thought that getting a bus would take too long, while Lexton Harrison (who had been waiting for Leon at Southbury Station in order to give him a lift to the ground) therefore

turned up 20 minutes after the match had kicked-off to find we only had 10 men because of all these last-minute absences and the fact that the Reserve Team had nobody else to spare because of numerous last-minute cry-offs of their own.

With Paul Ellerker, Gary Cokell, Chidi Ibekwem and Chris 'Nugget' Beeden also unavailable, we were effectively missing eight First Team squad players in total, and against the current Premier Division leaders that was always going to make it extremely difficult for us to get something out of this match, even though Brimsdown were only fielding a bare eleven themselves and with several key players suspended, injured or having other commitments.

With 17-year-old Reserve Team player Daniel Frasi being called up at the last minute for his First Team debut in a right-sided midfield position and Eric Ibekwem having to fill in at left-back, Manager Trevor Hughes decided to play a 4-4-1 formation to start with until Lexton Harrison arrived (and then a 4-4-2 thereafter) in an effort to make it less complicated for everyone and maybe give Brimsdown a bit of a surprise when they are more used to us playing a boring, negative and defensive (but often effective) 4-5-1 system against them. However, it was a freak own goal that had nothing to do with our tactics that saw us take the lead after only 7 minutes when an overhit back-pass from Brimsdown defender Jim Dickinson bounced over the head of keeper Dave Finch in comical fashion after taking a bad bounce off a bone-hard and dusty pitch which was in very poor condition compared to Hazelwood. Despite that though, Brimsdown created several reasonable chances in the first 15-20 minutes but let us off the hook with some poor finishing, especially when forward Daniel Saunders blasted a shot high over the bar from almost on the goal-line in one incident. However, when Lexton Harrison finally came on to make it 11-a-side, we started creating chances ourselves with Lexton not looking like he was injured at all despite his request not to be even named as a substitute for this match initially after twisting his dodgy knee at training during the week ! We also gradually tightened up at the back and approached Half-Time fairly comfortably in control of our 1-0 lead until Tony Speller gave the ball away right on the Half-Time whistle and Brimsdown punished us with a far post-header from Daniel Saunders for an equaliser which they probably deserved on the balance of play, but it was a really annoying mistake and not the first time this season we had conceded a sloppy goal in the 45th minute.

Brimsdown then came out for the Second Half predictably fired up and it was no real surprise to see them go into a 2-1 lead just four minutes after the break when Saunders tapped in the rebound after Darryl Johnson had made an excellent save to keep out a fierce drive from Billy Wingrove. However, our (now regular) Linesman, Chidi Ibekwem, had his flag up for offside against Saunders for the moment when Wingrove had the initial shot, but Referee Peter Jago over-ruled him for Saunders not interfering with play at the time !? Although we were a bit unlucky with that decision, we didn't let our heads go down and to our credit all our players tried as hard as they could even though at least half of them were really struggling with injuries or their general level of fitness (See Picture Left !) and were therefore constantly looking over to the touchline in the vain hope that a substitute might suddenly turn up...or that the watching Chris 'Nugget' Beeden might attempt to defy a 'puffed up knee' from playing 70 minutes for Broxbourne Borough Reserves the day before...or even that TIM Beeden

might stop sneezing and coughing and put a kit on !

Not surprisingly though, it was that lack of fitness which was once again our undoing as Brimsdown's tricky left-winger Billy Wingrove started finding it all too easy to get past the inexperienced Daniel Frasi and the heavily strapped-up Tony Speller in the later stages, although once again the goal that Wingrove scored in the 79th minute to put his side 3-1 up was a dubious one in terms of the Referee's interpretation of the active/non-active offside laws with Chidi Ibekwem's flag once again being ignored. To rub it in for us in that respect, we then had a goal disallowed in the 89th minute for exactly the same sort of thing when Conor McGovern looked like he had given us a lifeline by finishing off an excellent move. That saw Steve Cokell booked for protesting too vigorously, but that may have been more down to his own frustration at messing up an even better move prior to that with a feeble shot straight at keeper Finch, while other reasonable chances were also created but invariably failed to lead to a decent shot on goal.

Of course it's worth remembering that we beat Brimsdown 2-1 in this fixture last season with a winner scored in identical circumstances regarding an offside flag being over-ruled, so although we were unlucky on *this* occasion, things even themselves out in the end and although it was frustrating to lose when Brimsdown were there for the taking if we had fielded a stronger side, none of our players who *did* play had a bad game and that was encouraging considering all the demoralising problems we had to face with last-minute cry-offs before the match.

[CLICK HERE](#) to have a look at Brimsdown Rovers' website. (Click on 'Match Report')