

Sunday 10th October 2004

Mercury Waltham Sunday League Premier Division Match at Hazelwood Sports Ground

EDMONTON ROVERS	1	BROXBOURNE RANGERS	4	HT 1-1
<i>Woolston (41 mins.)</i>		<i>Saxon (5, 73, 78, 79 mins.)</i>		

EDMONTON ROVERS LINE-UP (with Marks out of 10): Simon JACKSON (GK) (7); Robin PRYKE (6), Adam STOCK (7), Paul WOOLSTON (7), John BEASLEY (7); Leon Mc,KENZIE-Mc,KAY (6½), Paul ELLERKER (6½), Stuart DORWARD (7), Derek DORWARD (6½); Conor Mc,GOVERN (6½), Steve COKELL (6) **Subs.:** Daniel DALEY (6), Treasure MacCARTHY (6), FoysoL AHMED (6)

BROXBOURNE RANGERS LINE-UP: Daniel EVANS (GK); Sean GOODWIN, Gary LITTLECHILD, Dan PETTICAN, Rob CLARK; Mark BOOST, Stuart RINGE, Scott O'DONOGHUE, Andrew REED; Ben SAXON, Ben NEWMARCH **Subs.:** Scott BANKS, John BONUS, Dan BEAL

Referee: Kevin HUGHES

Weather Conditions: Sunny & Dry

Attendance: 30



Report: Having lost 5-0 to Broxbourne Rangers only three weeks earlier, we were quite looking forward to this return fixture when we realised we might be fielding a half-decent starting line-up for a change. Although Jon Ellis-Browne and Eric Ibekwem were still missing due to injuries, we had the likes of Robin Pryke, John Beasley, Leon Mc,Kenzie-Mc,Kay and Conor Mc,Govern all returning after missing the previous weeks' narrow defeat to Brimsdown Rovers, while Adam Stock was finally available to make his long-awaited 11-a-side debut for the club. However, not everything was perfect, as Paul Ellerker suddenly realised he had left his boots and shinpads back home in Pirton (about 100 miles away ?) and had to borrow replacements at the last minute, while our intended Club Linesman for the day, the injured Gary Cokell, arrived at

10.30.a.m. on the dot, only to find out that the game had already kicked-off because both teams are so well-organised that all the players had arrived early and were 'raring to go' !? That meant Tim Beeden (who, with skipper Stuart Dorward, was supposed to be our joint-Caretaker Manager for the day with Trevor Hughes on holiday in Las Vegas) had to run the line in the First Half...on the far side of the pitch because Stuart lost the toss and Broxbourne Rangers decided to kick towards the far (Youth Pitch) end with a strong wind blowing in that direction straight down the ground.

We also had Paul Woolston on medication again because of another re-occurrence of his dizzy spells (I keep forgetting the proper medical term for it !), and there was a danger that he would have to come off early in the game because of that. However, it was Robin Pryke who had a dizzy spell after just five minutes when he made an uncharacteristic and costly mistake with an underhit backpass which went straight to Broxbourne Rangers forward Ben Newmarch, who then squared the ball to Ben Saxon for an easy tap-in into an empty net with Simon Jackson left stranded.

Things then got even worse after just eight minutes though, when Steve Cokell's hamstring went again and he had to be replaced by the inexperienced Daniel Daley, who didn't really seem all that keen to come on as he cannot afford to pay his subs at the moment and didn't want to build up a backlog of 'Lexton Harrison proportions' and never be able to pay it all off ! However, with the likes of Marco Ellerker, Chidi Ibekwem and Jack Barry all unable to make themselves available and 'help us out when we are short' (as promised) we had little choice, although as it happened, Chris 'Nugget' Beeden had still not sorted out his proposed transfer to Division Two side Data and was watching from the touchline but refused to get changed as a substitute (for reasons best known to himself). In hindsight of course, we should have put 'Nugget' in the starting line-up and not taken a risk with Steve Cokell, but Steve was obviously desperate to play before he goes to Australia at the end of the month and the risk backfired...even though he did actually create and nearly finish one or two chances in the brief time that he was on.

Through not playing regularly so far this season though, some of our players understandably looked very rusty early on and there were numerous mis-placed passes, although Broxbourne Rangers were

doing the same sort of mistakes, despite fielding just as strong a side as they did in our previous meeting. With us playing a more adventurous 4-4-2 formation this time, that resulted in chances at both ends with Simon Jackson having to make two or three sharp saves, whereas we created some good chances but couldn't quite get them on target.



We were unlucky not to equalise in the 35th minute though when a scuffed and off-target close-range 'shot' from Robin Pryke was backheeled towards goal by Conor McGovern and may well have ended up going in of its own accord off the inside of the post, but Daniel Daley followed it in after being in an offside position and the goal was ruled out by Broxbourne Rangers Linesman Chris Elliott on the basis that Daley *touched* the ball...this being a hotly contested decision, but one that proved to be right (*having now edited the video !*).
(See picture above right)

Despite that setback though, we managed to make it 1-1 just before Half-Time when Paul Woolston was left unmarked at the far post to power in a header from Leon McKenzie-McKay's accurately-driven corner and we came off at the break a bit more happy with ourselves.

However, left-back John Beasley then put a downer on that by announcing that he would have to come off because of a 'twisted leg ?', so that saw Treasure 'Tex' MacCarthy come on for the start of the Second Half in midfield with Stuart Dorward moving back to sweeper and Adam Stock going to left-back. Fortunately though, it didn't affect our momentum and we gradually started getting on top as the Second Half went on, with Broxbourne Rangers keeper Daniel Evans suddenly having a lot more work to do as we pushed up a bit more and put some pressure on. The only problem with that though, was that right-back Robin Pryke was really starting to struggle with his fitness as a result of a persistent ankle/achilles injury and the fact that he was now only available to play once every three weeks (when *not* injured) due to work commitments. That saw him limping about particularly badly almost as soon as the Second Half started and Broxbourne Rangers presumably noticed that as Ben Saxon put them 2-1 ahead in the 73rd minute and then added two more goals within the space of another six minutes to make it 4-1 and leave us totally demoralised...all three of these goals being excellent finishes after either himself or one of his team-mates had got behind our defence too easily, with Robin being at fault for *all* of them (according to everyone in the 'inquest' down the pub afterwards) !

With Reserve Team player Foysol Ahmed (a midfielder) being our only remaining substitute though, we had no real option but for Robin to stay on, and indeed he had to last a full match as substitute Daniel Daley had to be substituted himself just after Broxbourne Rangers' second goal because of a combination of not pacing himself properly and running out of breath, some sort of off-the-ball feud with an opponent, and presumably getting the hump with his team-mates 'moaning' at him.

However, we became a shambles all round after that happened anyway with several players' heads going down and others going on 'walkabouts' and getting out of position and it was a real relief when Referee Kevin Hughes blew the Final Whistle without Broxbourne Rangers punishing us even more...they didn't because they made three late substitutions to give people a game and that disrupted their momentum.

It was very quiet in the changing rooms afterwards after suffering yet another defeat, while Gary Cokell had more bad news after trying to retrieve our match ball from a back garden in Connaught Gardens...unsuccessfully because it went in one occupied by a miserable bloke who was still seething from a ball breaking his greenhouse window last season ! (Apparently Steve Cokell was with Gary and said something along the lines of 'What the f**k do you expect when you've got a greenhouse next to a football pitch' ?!)

Despite it being a bit of a disastrous morning though, at least more or less everyone paid their subs and came down the pub afterwards, and with me in there to take the piss out of (as usual), everyone soon cheered up !