

Sunday 19th September 2004

Mercury Waltham Sunday League Premier Division Match at Flamstead End Playing Fields, Cheshunt

BROXBOURNE RANGERS	5	EDMONTON ROVERS	0	HT 3-0
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Saxon (23, 37 mins.),
N.O'Donoghue (41 mins.),
A.Reed (Pen.) (79 mins),
Newmarch (90 mins)

BROXBOURNE RANGERS LINE-UP: Daniel EVANS (GK); Dan REED, Gary LITTLECHILD, Steven BANKS, Nick O'DONOGHUE; Mark BOOST, Stuart RINGE, Scott O'DONOGHUE, Andy REED; Ben SAXON, Ben NEWMARCH **Subs.:** Simon SEAGER, John CHILDS, Sean GOODWIN

EDMONTON ROVERS LINE-UP (with Marks out of 10): Darryl JOHNSON (GK) (6½); Gary COKELL (6½), Tony SPELLER (6), Paul WOOLSTON (6½), John BEASLEY (7½); Eric IBEKWEM (6½), Chris BEEDEN (7), Paul ELLERKER (6½), Conor McGOVERN (6), Kevin DEDMAN (6½); Steve COKELL (6½) **Subs.:** Leon McKENZIE-McKAY (7), Daniel CASCOE (6½), Daniel DALEY (6)

Referee: Eddie WEBB

Weather Conditions: Sunny Spells

Attendance: 27



Report:

Having found North met (Riverside) tougher opposition than we expected the previous

week, we suspected that most teams in the Premier Division had strengthened their squads for this season, but even so, our old rivals Broxbourne Rangers really caught us out with *this* performance !

Despite being without first choice players Robin Pryke, Stuart Dorward, Derek Dorward, Adam Stock & Jon Ellis-Browne, such is the improvement in the strength of our own squad this season that we still managed to field 14 players who we would have expected to give Broxbourne Rangers a close game (on the basis of our two meetings last season in which we drew 3-3 and won 5-2). In fact the first 20 minutes didn't really give any indication of what was to follow, despite Broxbourne Rangers having a strong wind behind them, and although they managed two or three reasonable efforts at goal, we actually came the closest to taking the lead when Chris Beeden's spectacular 25 yard volley was brilliantly tipped away by keeper Daniel Evans. However, that ended up being just about Evans' only piece of meaningful action for the rest of the match, as once Ben Saxon put Broxbourne Rangers ahead from a half-chance in the 23rd minute after pouncing on a loose ball in the area and coolly rounding Darryl Johnson, we really crumbled after that, especially in the last 10 minutes of the First Half when a badly-unmarked Saxon made it 2-0 with a looping header from Ben Newmarch's quickly-taken 50-yard driven free-kick and then four minutes later when defender Nick O'Donoghue put Broxbourne 3-0 up with a good finish from a slick move that had us chasing shadows. Indeed we were lucky not to come off at Half-Time more than 3-0 down thanks to one or two good saves from Darryl Johnson and if we had been able to bring on eight substitutes for all those of our players who wanted to come off because of ankle injuries (or embarrassment) then we would have done !

We did actually have Stuart Dorward and Jon Ellis-Browne changed and named as two of our five substitutes, but their own ankle injuries had worsened in the warm-up, so Manager Trevor Hughes had no choice but to bring on youngsters Leon McKenzie-McKay and Daniel Cascoe for the start of the



Second Half in place of Conor Mc,Govern and Tony Speller, who had both been struggling really badly. However, Mc,Kenzie-Mc,Kay and Cascoe's extra fitness made us more competitive and with the wind behind us we managed to get back into the game in terms of possession while forcing numerous corners, although Broxbourne Rangers continued to look very solid at the back and we could only manage the occasional half-chance.

We then had another injury blow in the 63rd minute though when Eric Ibekwem had to be carried off after a bad challenge from behind (which went unpunished by Referee Webb for reasons best known to himself), and although that saw the speedy Daniel Daley come on to replace him, we found it hard to give him and Steve Cokell enough service, despite switching to a 4-4-2 formation in an effort to get back into the game.

That of course saw Broxbourne Rangers start hitting us on the break and they made it 4-0 from the penalty spot in the 79th minute when Daniel Cascoe was forced into bringing down a forward just inside the area, although in fairness that was the only mistake Cascoe made in what was a promising competitive First Team debut. Andrew 'Biffer' Reed then did a nonchalant chip to beat Darryl Johnson from the spot kick to rub it in even more and Broxbourne Rangers really 'took the piss' with their 5th goal in the last minute with a lightening quick one and two-touch move followed by a perfect cross from Ben Saxon and a first-time finish by Ben Newmarch which we couldn't do anything about defensively.

Broxbourne Rangers Manager John Spraggett told us after the match that that was their best performance for four years and the first time they had ever had Saxon, Newmarch and 'Biffer' (clearly their three best players) all playing at the same time. That had subsequently given all their players a boost and it was one of those games when they were all at the top of their game (and perhaps more importantly all 100% fit !?). Unfortunately we have to hold our hands up and admit we were beaten by a better side on the day, but then we can always hope that at some stage this season we will get a full-strength and fully-fit side out ourselves and give somebody else the same sort of punishment.