

Sunday 30th September 2007

Mercury Waltham Sunday League Division One Match at Pound Close, Hoddesdon

**BROXBOURNE RANGERS
OLD BOYS**

3

EDMONTON ROVERS

1

HT 1-0

*Staines (40, 77 mins.),
East (83 mins.)*

Speller (55 mins.)

BROXBOURNE RANGERS OLD BOYS' LINE-UP: Graham WIGGS; Andrew PEDLEY, Phil PLEDGER, Adam SMITH, Jamie DIXON; Bradley STAINES, Danny ROE, Danny EAST, Adam GARRETT; Alan GREEN, John HOCKLEY **Subs.:** James THORNE, Mark WILLIAMSON

EDMONTON ROVERS LINE-UP (with Marks out of 10): Ozel OZERMAN (GK) ($6\frac{1}{2}$); Stuart DORWARD (7), Alan BARNARD ($7\frac{1}{2}$), Terry MOORE (7), Tony SPELLER (7); Tem ADIL (7), Danny HAGAN (7), Clark WILLIAMS (7), Stuart BYHURST ($6\frac{1}{2}$); Derek DORWARD ($6\frac{1}{2}$), Daniel DALEY ($6\frac{1}{2}$) **Subs.:** Steve COKELL (*On for Williams (Injured) at Half-Time.*) ($7\frac{1}{2}$), Robin PRYKE (*On for Adil 69 mins.*) ($6\frac{1}{2}$), Tony KING (*On for Byhurst 76 mins.*) ($6\frac{1}{2}$)

Referee: Steve MURLESS

Weather Conditions: Warm & Sunny

Attendance: 21

**Factual
Report (by
Laurence
Hughes):**

After two dramatic and highly entertaining Cup wins in a row on the 'lush' surface at Hazelwood, it was back to the bread and butter of Division One for this match against regular opponents Broxbourne



Rangers Old Boys...and back to picking up stones, bits of rock, bottle tops and other assorted debris from the Pound Close pitch before we could start !

In the corresponding fixture last season the pitch had a bit more give in it, although thick fog was a hazard that time as we slumped to a disappointing 3-1 defeat. We also fielded a weakened side with no proper goalkeeper available and only one substitute instead of three, so with our current form coming into this match, this time we were confident of avenging that scoreline, even though Conor Mc Govern (flu) and Leon McKenzie-McKay (working/ill !?) had to drop out of the squad while Nick Vertigans, Paul Woolston and Martin Loveday had already declared themselves unavailable after playing the week before.

Such is the strength of our squad at the moment though, that we still had three good substitutes for this match despite those absences, while goalkeeper Ozel Ozerman was confident after his

heroics the week before and Tony Speller, Tem Adil and Stuart Byhurst were all good enough to be given starts in front of others who would normally be considered automatic choices.

However, as

soon as the game kicked off, it became clear that the dreadful state of the pitch would hinder our passing game and suit Broxbourne Rangers Old Boys' more robust players, as the ball ended up bouncing 10 feet up in the air most of the time instead of rolling along the ground properly, and winning 50/50 aerial challenges has never really been our forte.

That resulted in a really scrappy First Half in which we found it difficult to create clear-cut chances, whereas Broxbourne Rangers Old Boys hit the bar, forced Ozel Ozerman into a good save and generally looked the better side all round as half our players ended up having to be treated for injuries from accidental collisions in which they invariably came off worst.

It was no real surprise when Broxbourne Rangers Old Boys took the lead in the 40th minute then, as Bradley Staines, their new signing from the now defunct Broxbourne Rangers Reserves, marked his debut with a good low shot from just inside the area after bustling his way through a couple of challenges. With Broxbourne Rangers Reserves having struggled in the lower half of Division

Two last season, but Staines having looked the best player on the pitch in the First Half, that was a bit embarrassing for us as we came off 1-0 down at Half-Time, but he was given something to think about for the Second Half as we brought on Steve Cokell at Half-Time for the injured Clark Williams, and that made a massive difference for us from an attacking viewpoint.



We started creating chances almost immediately after the break with Cokell at the forefront of most of them, but our equaliser in the 55th minute was from a most unlikely source as left-back

Tony Speller drilled a spectacular 25-yard half-volley into the far top corner from a loose ball after Broxbourne Rangers Old Boys keeper Graham Wiggs had denied us with one of what was to be several brilliant saves during the Second Half.

We then really should have gone on to win the game after Speller had made it 1-1 though, especially when Broxbourne Rangers Old Boys midfielder Danny Roe was sent off just four minutes later for swearing at Referee Steve Murlless. (It was one of those where as soon as Roe bellowed out his comment, the players of both sides looked skywards and knew he was off...the Ref had no choice really). With Broxbourne Rangers Old Boys down to 10 men, we decided to go for it shortly afterwards by bringing on defender Robin Pryke for Tem Adil and pushing skipper Stuart Dorward into midfield, but it was actually Robin who should have put us 2-1 up when he somehow sidefooted over the bar from almost on the goal-line after a scramble from a corner, although the ball did come at him very quickly. We missed numerous other chances though as we suddenly started playing our best football of the season so far, with Steve Cokell in particular being foiled by keeper Wiggs on several occasions, while Daniel Daley fired over the bar when clean through, Stuart Dorward had a shot tipped onto the crossbar, and numerous good crosses just needed a decisive touch.

While all that was happening though, at the other end, Broxbourne Rangers Old Boys had just two good chances in the Second Half and took them both...and this despite only having 10 men on the pitch ! Firstly in the 77th minute when Bradley Staines scored his second of the match with another good finish after beating an ill-advised offside trap, and then in the 83rd minute, midfielder Danny East scored a third with a speculative toe-poked chip from well outside the area that caught the unsuspecting Ozel Ozerman off his line. It caught the cameraman out a bit as well, but I was told that Oz was not at fault !

On this occasion, a comeback was too much to ask for, and it was back to us being unlucky (as we normally are, especially against these opponents who are somewhat of a bogey team for us). We had clearly used up all our luck in our three previous matches.

TREVOR HUGHES'S MANAGER'S REPORT

Following two successful cup tie wins we played our second league match against old rivals Broxbourne Rangers Old Boys who have been a bit of a bogey team in recent seasons. The hard and bobbly pitch did not suit our passing game but that should not be an excuse for a poor first half performance in which we only created a few half chances and were lucky to be only 1-0 down at half time through a 40th minute goal. Steve Cokell came on at half time for the injured Clark Williams and a spell of pressure was rewarded when Tony Speller fired in a spectacular equaliser after a corner. The Broxbourne keeper then pulled off a succession of fine saves both before and after Broxbourne were reduced to 10 men with a player sent off for swearing at the referee. At 1-1 against 10 men I was confident that we would score the winner and made two more substitutions bringing on Robin Pryke to allow Stuart Dorward to push forward and Tony King into the midfield. Robin then missed our best chance from inside the six yard box and minutes later we were caught on the break to go behind against the run of play. Our recent comeback performances meant that we kept going forward and Daniel Daley had a great chance to equalise but lobbed over the bar. A minute later and Broxbourne took a 3-1 lead with a long range shot after another breakaway. With only seven minutes

plus injury time left we still hit the bar and forced more saves from the keeper but this time the comeback did not happen and we slipped to a disappointing defeat.