

Sunday 9th March 2008

Mercury Waltham Sunday League Division One Match at Hazelwood Sports Ground

EDMONTON ROVERS	2	BROXBOURNE RANGERS OLD BOYS	3	HT 0-0
Green (77 mins.), McGovern (85 mins.)		Green (60 mins.), Williamson (66 mins.), Isham (76 mins.)		

EDMONTON ROVERS LINE-UP (with Marks out of 10): Ozel OZERMAN (GK) (7); Rob BROWN (7½), Stuart DORWARD (7), Martin LOVEDAY (7); Derek DORWARD (7), Tem ADIL (6½), Stuart BYHURST (6), Tony KING (7); Vernon 'Kizza' NXUMALO (6½); Conor McGOVERN (6½), Daniel DALEY (6½) **Subs.:** Danny GREEN (On for D.Dorward 72 mins.) (6½), Scott JENKINS (On for Adil 66 mins.) (7)

BROXBOURNE RANGERS OLD BOYS' LINE-UP: Graham WIGGS (GK); David MILSON, Mark WILLIAMSON, Adam SMITH, Jamie DIXON; Scott PEDROZ, Adam GARRETT, James THORN, Paul ISHAM; Alan GREEN, John HOCKLEY **Sub.:** Paul WATTS (On at Half-Time for Pedroz)

Referee: Anthony WILLS

Weather Conditions: Sunny

Attendance:

11

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

Following our record 10-0 defeat to St. Mary's back in early

December, we had actually put together a decent run of performances in our seven matches since

then, with our

only defeats being by narrow margins to supposedly good sides when we were fielding only 10 men in one of those matches and only nine in the other ! With Broxbourne Rangers Old Boys lying below us in the Division One table and being a traditional mid-lower table side, we therefore should have been looking at gaining a fairly comfortable three points from this match to drag us clear of the relegation dogfight, but unfortunately this was one of those weeks that we have had too many of this season where just about everything went wrong.

Firstly, we only had 13 players to choose from, with virtually all of them being forwards or attacking midfielders, this being due to the absence of all four of our first-choice defenders in Alan Barnard (still in New Zealand), Terry Moore (recovering from his Stag Night), Paul Woolston



(babysitting) and Tony Speller (his son's birthday), while four regular midfielders in Danny Hagan, Clark Williams, Steve Cokell and Nick Vertigans were also unavailable, three of them with metatarsal injuries ! This meant that our current first-choice goalkeeper Martin Loveday therefore had to play as a defender, of which he is perfectly capable of doing of course. However, for some reason he thought we were playing at Enfield Playing Fields and turned up there instead...where he was then stranded because he does not drive. That saw him having to get our two substitutes Danny Green and Scott Jenkins to go and pick him up (at 10.15.a.m. !), but of course having done that, they then couldn't get out of the Donkey Lane car park because of all the cars coming into the ground. (Donkey Lane now being more-or-less a one-way road because of Enfield Council's ridiculous decision to allow houses with no garages to be built down there on what was already a narrow lane !). That meant they all missed the kick-off and Manager Trevor Hughes also nearly did as well, as he had to pick up Vernon 'Kizza' Nxumalo from Arnos Grove tube station at 10.00.a.m. and then found no parking space in Connaught Gardens when he finally arrived at the ground. Does 'Kizza' not realise that our players are actually supposed to meet at the venue at 10.00.a.m. and that our matches kick-off at 10.30.a.m. ? In fact at 10.15.a.m. we only had six players there...until Daniel Daley suddenly strolled along, closely followed by the Dorward brothers, who had informed Manager Hughes that they would be at the ground 'on time' for a change. By their standards though, 10.20.a.m. presumably was 'on time'. ?! Referee Anthony Wills was there on time though, but 'fortunately' he spotted a large fox-hole on the pitch which had to be filled in before we could start, this being something myself and Tony King had missed when we put the nets up an hour before the kick-off. With me already standing on my TV gantry though, it meant that King, Stuart Dorward and Conor McGovern had to 'volunteer' to go over to the car park and get a handful of 'dirt' each to bring over to the pitch and fill in the hole before we could start, but with there still being no sign of Loveday and co arriving at the ground, they 'sensibly' took their time about it, even though we could well end up being fined for a late kick-off.

We eventually had to start with only 10 men though, by which time it had also become apparent that I had left the water bottles in my car and the players had left the medical kit locked in the changing rooms...because that is the substitutes' job to bring that out. However, they were still trying to get out of the car park at Enfield Playing Fields at the time ! (It probably also didn't help that they had been in a pub all night watching the Haye v. Macarinelli fight !?). Not surprisingly then, we were extremely disjointed as soon as the game kicked off, and we almost conceded a silly goal after just 50 seconds when centre-forward Conor McGovern tried to help out in defence, only to woefully under-hit a back-pass straight to an opposing forward. Thankfully though, we had Ozel Ozerman in goal for this match, who thanks to his diminutive size, is probably the best of our numerous keepers at coming quickly off his line and diving at forwards' feet, and he managed to save Conor from much embarrassment. In fact Oz then had to make another good save from John Hockley's far post header after just three minutes and at that stage it looked as if we might be in for a bit of a hiding with no proper defenders in our line-up. Thankfully though, we only had to play the first 12 minutes with 10 men as Loveday finally arrived to slot into the back three as we continued with our recently 'successful' 3-4-1-2 formation, albeit with numerous players having to play in unfamiliar positions as part of that set-up. Broxbourne Rangers Old Boys though were also missing eight key players, including midfield regulars Danny East & Danny Roe, defenders Phil Pledger & Andrew Pedley and forward ? James Waggitt, who had scored a hat-trick in a 3-2 win against Larsens in one of their more recent matches, so we couldn't really complain about our predicament as they had similar problems, especially half-way through the First Half when midfielder Scott Pedroz had to go off with a facial injury after an aerial challenge with Tony King. Strangely though, they didn't bring on substitute Paul Watts until Half-Time and played the rest of the First Half with only 10 men. (Presumably Watts had no boots and somebody had to go and find a pair for him ?). That saw our 11 men get on top for the rest of the half and create a few half-decent chances, but Vernon 'Kizza' Nxumalo squandered the best one by blazing over the bar from only 6 yards. In fact Broxbourne Rangers Old Boys came the closest to breaking the deadlock in the 36th minute, but Ozel Ozerman made another good save by tipping a long-range effort onto the post. With it being obvious that our opponents were a weaker side than most we have played so far this season, there was a lot of frustration in our half-time team talk after a First Half of

constant moaning by certain players...the biggest problem being that Broxbourne Rangers Old Boys were sitting back and defending deep, which therefore made it hard for the likes of 'Kizza' and Daniel Daley to use their pace and get in behind them. In fact, because we had so many



attacking players in our line-up, they just all got in each others' way most of the time.

The start of the Second Half carried on in much the same vein with Broxbourne Rangers Old Boys finding it easier to get in decent shots at

goal as they had more space in which to play by hitting us on the break, and once again we were lucky to escape in the 48th minute when they hit the post again, this time from Mark Williamson's long-range free-kick. However, it wasn't until the 60th minute that they finally took the lead when Alan Green cleverly headed a long free-kick from Jamie Dixon into the top corner with Ozel Ozerman way off his line, and then it got even worse for us just six minutes later when we found ourselves 2-0 down as Williamson easily won a header from a corner which bounced downwards and up into the top corner (over Tem Adil's outstretched hand on the goal-line !). That saw Manager Trevor Hughes immediately decide to make a substitution with Scott Jenkins coming on to become our 32nd different player used so far this season...when most other clubs probably have no more than 18 ? More importantly though, he was capable of playing as a half-decent defender, so that allowed Stuart Dorward to go into midfield and not surprisingly we looked much better after that, but particularly when Danny Green was also brought on six minutes later as we risked a 3-3-4 formation in an effort to get back into the match.

Unfortunately though we found ourselves 3-0 down in the 76th minute when Paul Isham scored from the rebound after Ozel Ozerman had misjudged a long ball and punched it straight up in the air, but substitute Green pulled one back for us just a minute later with a good run and finish from Conor McGovern's through ball after an excellent move straight from the re-start and that definitely gave us a bit of confidence, as bringing on a couple of new signings who look like possible improvements to our squad hasn't happened all that often in recent seasons. That saw Conor McGovern and Daniel Daley both miss good chances before Conor pulled another goal back in the 85th minute when he equalled the [All-Time Club First Team Goalscoring Record](#) by converting Daniel Daley's low cross from close range and we could easily have notched a deserved equaliser in Injury Time, but Stuart Dorward's low shot on the turn went just inches wide with keeper Graham Wiggs well beaten.

We therefore had to settle for a 3-2 defeat in the end, which was very frustrating as our opponents were there for the taking if only we could have fielded a more balanced side. In fact we have now only beaten Broxbourne Rangers Old Boys once in our last nine meetings, which is a very poor record and undoubtedly one of the reasons that we continue to be stuck in a relegation battle in Division One year after year. More fresh faces such as Rob Brown, Danny Green and Scott Jenkins may be the answer...and **training sessions** !?

TREVOR HUGHES'S MANAGER'S REPORT

The absence of all four of our defenders meant drastic changes to our team for Sunday's game against our bogey side, Broxbourne Rangers Old Boys. Ozel Ozerman returned in goal to allow Martin Loveday to play in defence with midfielders Rob Brown and Stuart Dorward. In fact, Loveday missed the first 12 minutes having gone to the wrong venue and another midfielder, Stuart Byhurst, started the game in defence. Byhurst and Tem Adil played in the centre of midfield with Tony King and Derek Dorward playing out wide and Vernon 'Kizza' Nxumalo returned to play behind the front two of Conor McGovern and Daniel Daley. Having started with 10 men we almost conceded twice in the first few minutes but Oz made good saves. However, we started to get on top as the game progressed and Kizza had our best chance but he blazed over the open goal. Oz did another good save, fingertipping a long range effort onto the post, but we were disappointed to be 0-0 at half time as we wasted the chances we created. Early in the second half it was again Broxbourne who hit the post from a free kick and we finally went behind after 60 minutes when another free kick was headed in. We conceded a rare goal from a corner after 66 minutes to go 2-0 behind so I had to make some tactical changes. Scott Jenkins came on at sweeper for his debut and Rob Brown and Stuart Dorward pushed forward into their more comfortable midfield positions with Stuart Byhurst dropping back into defence. I then brought on another forward, Dan Green, and we went to a bold 3-3-4 formation. Unfortunately, before we could even mount an attack, Broxbourne scored a third goal after Oz misjudged a high ball and the rebound was driven back into the net. Our new formation meant that we were now in all out attacking mode and Dan Green scored his first goal for the club from Conor McGovern's assist, followed shortly after by a goal for Conor from Daniel Daley's cross. We had five minutes left to search for an equaliser and our best chance fell to Stuart Dorward in injury time but his shot went narrowly wide. It was yet another close game against opposition who we should be beating comfortably if we had our full squad available.