

Sunday 17th August 2003

Pre-Season Friendly Match at the Ashton Playing Fields, Woodford Green

EDMONTON ROVERS RESERVES	0	C.D.L. SPARTANS	5	HT 0-3
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		<i>Crouch (8, 75 mins.), Newman (17 mins.), Farrell (25 (Pen.), 60 mins.)</i>		
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Edmonton Rovers Line-Up (with Marks out of 10): Jerome HARRISON (GK) (8); Ali AHMED (6½), Scott ROBERTSON (6½), Gary ADAMSON (7), Lee OSBORN (6½); Brian KAMUTEKU (6), Paul REBAIRO (7), Barry MATTHEWS (6½), Martin LOVEDAY (7½); Lexton HARRISON (7), Leon Mc,KENZIE-Mc,KAY (7) **Subs:** Ben ANKRAH (7), Mashood BURAAHEE (6)

C.D.L. Spartans Line-Up: Paul REED (GK), Roderick BENNETT, Mark NEWMAN, Mark DEARMAN, Earl BAKER, Michael CROUCH, Elton MARKS, Peter NESBITT, Daniel TURNER, Mark FARRELL, Marc Mc,AULEY **Subs:** None ?

Referee: Adam SMITH

Weather Conditions: Warm & Sunny

Attendance: 3 !?

Report: Despite the alarming-looking scoreline, our Reserve Team were a bit more organised for this their second match since their re-formation as Lexton Harrison and his crew only turned up 15 minutes late instead of 40 and the game actually kicked off on time thanks to Committee Members Scott Robertson & Tim Beeden being in attendance this week to help out Manager Mark Howley. Beeden though was originally named as goalkeeper for this match, only to pull a hamstring playing Cricket for Edmonton the day before, so that saw the unlikely figure of Jerome Harrison 'volunteer' to go in goal, while his Cousin Lexton was named as Captain for the day to celebrate his 100th Appearance for the club (most of which have been as a substitute for the First Team of course !). We also had Martin Loveday (a cricket-playing colleague of Tim Beeden's) making his debut in a 'one-off/helping out' basis, while substitutes Ben Ankrah and Mashood Burahee were very much unknown quantities at the 11-a-side game.

Despite all that, we actually started the game quite well with Loveday (who plays for Norsemen First XI on Saturdays ?) showing some nice touches in a left-sided midfield position, but it soon became clear after only eight minutes that our opponents C.D.L. Spartans (a late replacement for our original opponents North Enfield, but another side from Division Six) were another one of these sides (like Inter Mill Lane last season) who may have 'fooled' the Mercury Waltham League somewhat regarding their ability, as a defence-splitting pass saw them take the lead with Jerome Harrison being beaten to the ball by the onrushing Michael Crouch. In fact C.D.L. Spartans then went 2-0 up just 9 minutes later through Mark Newman, but that was entirely down to the fact that Mark Howley had been unable to do a team-talk before the match and sort out the zonal marking system from corners thanks to most of his squad turning up late.

Things then got even worse shortly afterwards when Gary Adamson was caught out in defence and had to concede a penalty by pulling back an opponent, so with Jerome Harrison in goal that meant we were 3-0 down well before Half-Time as Mark Farrell easily converted from the spot. However, we suddenly started putting some moves together after that and finished the First Half very strongly, but although they worked hard, Lexton Harrison and Leon Mc,Kenzie-Mc,Kay were up against some highly experienced defenders who gave them few opportunities.

Indeed C.D.L. Spartans apparently fielded a whole team of ex-Senior Saturday League or Sunday League Premier Division players and the general consensus of opinion amongst our Reserve Team's more experienced players was that they will 'absolutely walk' Division Six this season and are capable of giving our First Team a close game !

With the game already dead for us, the Second Half was just a case of swapping players around with 'roll-on, roll-off' substitutions, but C.D.L. Spartans had much better team-work (despite this being their first-ever match) and it was no surprise when they went 4-0 up in the 60th minute after a free-kick rebounded off the crossbar and the loose ball was converted by Mark Farrell at the second attempt as our many inexperienced players stood like statues. We then conceded a 5th goal soon afterwards as a looping header from Michael Crouch gave Jerome Harrison no chance, but although a proper goalkeeper may have saved three of C.D.L. Spartans five goals, Jerome still managed to make some good saves and earn himself the man-of-the-match vote from Manager Mark Howley.

Despite the heavy defeat though, there were no major inquests or 'bust-ups' and everyone realised they had been beaten by a quality side, but were sensible enough to know that there was plenty of room for improvement which would come with more match practice and experience.

This match report has been worded by Laurence Hughes from notes supplied by Reserve Team Manager Mark Howley.

[CLICK HERE](#) to visit C.D.L. Spartans' website for their version of events.