

Sunday 22nd August 2004

Pre-Season Friendly Match at Enfield Playing Fields (Pitch 15)

CHURCHBURY

5

EDMONTON ROVERS
RESERVES

2

HT 2-0

Pryor (16, 20 mins),
Skipp (50, 58 mins),
Toye (53 mins)

Copues (68 mins.),
Burahee (90 mins.)

CHURCHBURY'S LINE-UP: Paul TADGELL (GK); Carl SEWELL, Phil EDWARDS, Peter NORRIS; Mark HILL, Stacy LLOYD, Tony WEBSTER, Ben WARD, Justin RENN; Dean TOYE, Simon PRYOR **Subs.:** Andy SKIPP, Chris DEARMAN

EDMONTON ROVERS RESERVES' LINE-UP (with Marks out of 10): Jerome HARRISON (GK) (6½); Dave BAGNALL (6½), Ritchie COPUES (7), Gary ADAMSON (6½), Terry DELLER (6½); Colin BESTER (6½), Barry MATTHEWS (7½), Clark WILLIAMS (6½), Lee OSBORN (6½); Lexton HARRISON (7), Kevin DEDMAN (6½) **Subs.:** Foysoh AHMED (6), Thomas DELL (6), Mashood BURAAHEE (6½), Ali AHMED (6½)

Referee: Neil MORRIS

Weather Conditions: Warm & Sunny

Attendance: 14

Report: With both Darryl Johnson and Simon Jackson out injured and Russell Beeden up in Manchester, once again we had to play a Reserve Team match without a proper goalkeeper and that was probably the main reason that we lost this match so heavily, not so much because of individual mistakes but by the lack of communication and teamwork at the back. That was certainly evident in the first 20 minutes when Churchbury's lively looking forward Simon Pryor nipped in to score twice with really good finishes after some bad hesitancy in our defence, this not being helped by the absence of sweeper Tony Speller (due to social commitments), right-back Dave Bagnall being a bit sluggish because of a heavily strapped-up knee and skipper Lee Osborn (who had been playing in a central midfield role) going off after only five minutes after suffering a reaction to the fall he had in a Manchester Nightclub the weekend before ! (Did they get that on CCTV by any chance ?).

We then rode our luck a few times to avoid going in at Half-Time more than 2-0 down, especially when Churchbury midfielder Tony Webster blasted the ball wide from the penalty spot after a foul 'just inside ?' the area by Dave Bagnall, but we managed to create just as many chances ourselves in the First Half only for Barry Matthews and Lexton Harrison (mainly) to spoil some excellent build up play by shooting feebly straight at keeper Paul Tadgell on numerous occasions. Churchbury had finished just below mid-table in Division Five last season, so we were expecting an easier game than this, but they had strengthened their side with two or three new signings and a 2-0 win over Enfield Rosaneri in a Pre-Season Friendly two weeks earlier had confirmed their improvement. That meant the switching of Dave Bagnall to goalkeeper and Jerome Harrison to the left-hand side of midfield at the start of the Second Half made no difference and two further goals within the space of three minutes early in the Second Half by Andy Skipp and Dean Toye made it 4-0 and left us with a mountain to climb.

At least we had four substitutes available though, despite Ali Ahmed and Mashood Burahee turning up after the kick-off for reasons best known to themselves, but with Clark Williams (one of our better players) having gone home at Half-Time to attend his son's first birthday party and one or two others struggling with their fitness, Churchbury soon added a 5th goal when Andy Skipp pounced on a mistake by Jerome Harrison and easily rounded Dave Bagnall to score. By that stage, Laurence & Trevor Hughes had left to go to the First Team's match (a 12.30.p.m. kick-off in Cheshunt) and neither would have been too surprised to hear of a final scoreline of 10-0 or something similar on the basis of what they had already seen, not because any of our players were playing particularly badly, but because Churchbury were just too strong and physical for most of our players and were more of a settled team.

However, Manager Mark Howley actually ended up phoning Trevor with a final scoreline of 5-2, this apparently coming about as a result of Kevin Dedman dropping back into midfield and creating more chances and our new players Ritchie Copues, Colin Bester, Thomas Dell and Dedman himself all starting to get used to their team-mates style of play a bit more. That saw Copues pull a goal back in the 68th minute to make it 5-1 after a mistake by Churchbury keeper Tadgell, but then things started getting a bit silly with some 'naughty' challenges, resulting in Copues (and a Churchbury player) being asked to leave the field by referee Neil Morris (to be replaced by substitute Ali Ahmed in our case, Ali actually coming on and playing really well as a

stand-in centre-half apparently !).

We then managed another consolation goal in the last minute when last season's Most Improved Reserve Team Player Award winner Mashood Burahee ran onto Kevin Dedman's through ball to produce a good left-footed finish.

We ended up suffering a fairly heavy defeat then, but with better players to come in and others having to play for the First Team this was not a disaster as it gave more players a game, which is the main purpose of Pre-Season Friendlies of course and the team spirit was very good afterwards.