

Sunday 21st February 2010				
Waltham Sunday League Division One Match at St. Mary's School, Cheshunt				
EAST HERTS	4	EDMONTON ROVERS	2	HT 3-2
Beattie (12 mins.), McCall (21, 91 mins.), Howard (40 mins.)		Smith (20 mins.), McGovern (44 mins)		
EAST HERTS LINE-UP: Rory WHEELER (GK); Liam COXALL, Billy PARKER, Dean SMITH, Gavin KIRBY; Vince DiCARLO, Simon BEATTIE, Ronnie HOWARD, Luke MAY; Rob DENNETT, Stuart McCALL Sub.: Dave BELFORD (On for DiCarlo 55 mins.))				
EDMONTON ROVERS LINE-UP (with Marks out of 10): Darryl JOHNSON (GK) (6½): Terry MOORE (6½), Alan BARNARD (6½), Martin LOVEDAY (6): Steve COKELL (6½), Danny HAGAN (6½), Danny SMITH (6½), Jim ARROWSMITH (6); Terry BROWN (6); Conor MCGOVERN (6½), Daniel DALEY (6½) Subs.: Kris SPYROU (On for Arrowsmith 62 mins) (6½), Stuart DORWARD (On for Hagan 81 mins.) (6)				
Referee: John STOCKMAN		Weather Conditions: Heavy Rain (1st Half), Cloudy (2nd Half)		Attendance: 14
Report (by Laurence Hughes): After our excellent 5-1 win the week before against Cheshunt (Sunday), we were really looking forward to this match against runaway League leaders East Herts, especially as we had lost 4-0 to them early in the season when we were arguably the better side. We were also fielding a stronger line-up this time, even though we had three players drop out on the morning of the match in goalkeeper Simon Jackson (Flu), Rob Brown (Suspected hairline fracture in his shin) and Vernon 'Kizza' Nxumalo (No trains running from Liverpool Street due to engineering works). We also had Tony King and Paul Woolston unavailable due to family/social commitments, while skipper Stuart Dorward could only be named as a substitute due to a foot injury, but in Darryl Johnson, Danny Smith, Jim Arrowsmith, Conor McGovern and Daniel Daley we had five excellent replacements to bring into the starting line-up after they had all missed the Cheshunt (Sunday) match. The day started 'badly' though when we turned up at the Southbury Leisure Centre for our usual meet only to find the car park jam-packed due to an all-day Tournament on the AstroTurf, and with the rain lashing down it was absolute chaos trying to find out where our players were. Eventually we managed to get everyone together to be able to leave there at 9.50.a.m. (instead of 9.30.a.m. as originally planned), but as we were certain the game was going to get called off because of a waterlogged pitch anyway, we were not in too much of a rush. When we got to St. Mary's School at five past ten though and were ushered into the Girls changing rooms that East Herts reserve for their opponents, the pitch turned out to be perfectly playable apart from a couple of small puddles which were fairly easily removed, but Referee John Stockman did warn that he might have to abandon the match if the rain continued to fall so heavily. Unlike the last time we were due to play East Herts at this venue though...when we bottled out of playing on a frozen pitch and conceded the match...we were in a much more determined mood and far more willing to cope with what were appalling conditions. The first few minutes were fairly even then, but East Herts took an early lead after 12 minutes when midfielder Simon Beattie scored with a free header, and that really set us back on our heels. However, we managed to equalise with our first real chance of the game in the 20th minute when Conor McGovern was allowed to run across the edge of the penalty area and get a shot in too easily which was apparently deliberately deflected in by Danny Smith for his first goal for the club, although the video seems to suggest that the ball just hit him and he didn't know too much about it! At that point we thought it was going to be a very close game between two in-form sides, but East Herts regained their lead just 30 seconds later when forward Stuart McCall, who scored a hat-trick against us in the first match and had scored 24 goals in 14 matches so far this season coming into this match, drilled in a fierce drive from an acute angle to put them 2-1 up. East Herts then started creating several other chances with accurate through balls and perfectly driven crosses and free-kicks, while as usual in such conditions we really struggled to get our passing going, although at least our players competed well in 50/50 challenges. East Herts skipper Ronnie Howard then put them further ahead in the 40th minute though with a well-struck shot from 25 yards that dipped over Darryl Johnson and into the roof of the net, and that seemed to have killed us off already as they were by far the better side. However, Conor McGovern gave us some hope for the Second Half by pulling it back to 3-2 just a minute before Half-Time with a sharp finish from close range after good battling by Daniel Daley, and our team talk during the break was therefore a lot more positive than it could have been.				
		Unfortunately though, the Second Half saw us create hardly anything apart from one mad scramble early on in which Terry Brown did an air shot in front of goal after the ball became stuck in a puddle, and although the introduction of Kris Spyrou in the 62nd minute gave us a better balance with the left-footed Steve Cokell then being able to play on the left, we never really looked like equalising and East Herts grabbed a 4th goal in Injury Time through Stuart McCall (again) to confirm a deserved win. Indeed for the majority of the match, and the first 25 minutes of the Second Half especially, virtually all of East Herts players were right on their game and 'bang at it' (to use football parlance) with every eye-of-the-needle pass finding a team-mate, defenders reading every through ball we tried to make, and virtually every shot threatening our goal, while we competed well but were just not sharp enough with our passing going forward and in tracking runners. It resulted in East Herts probably having even more clear-cut chances in total than Cheshunt Corinthians had when they beat us 7-1, and we had to thank the 'woodwork' (about 4 times), several wayward shots off target from good positions, and a number of excellent saves, especially towards the end, from Darryl Johnson for us avoiding a similar defeat. Even though their Manager claimed they were fielding a weakened side, there was no doubt that East Herts were far better than when we played them back in September, and on this evidence we have got no chance of finishing in the top two this season. We were a long way behind them in terms of fitness, sharpness, movement and team-work, and the only thing we could take out of the game was an improvement in competitiveness. It was a really disappointing day, and as usual after such crucial results, made worse by numerous players announcing afterwards that they were unavailable for the next match. Oh well. Time for others to have a game then, as we undoubtedly finish in our usual lower-mid table position yet again.		



TREVOR HUGHES'S MANAGER'S REPORT

After an excellent result last Sunday we were confident going into our match against league leaders, East Herts, despite injuries to key players Stuart Dorward and Rob Brown. Goalkeeper Simon Jackson was ill, Tony King was unavailable and Vernon 'Kizza' Nxumalo was stuck at Liverpool Street without a train but we still had a strong side. Darryl Johnson has been patient in waiting for another opportunity in goal and Danny Smith returned to central midfield. Stuart was fit enough to be named as a substitute together with Kris Spyrou. We started quite well but fell behind after 12 minutes when a good cross was headed in by an unmarked forward who had run behind our defence. Our equaliser was a bit fortunate for a change when Conor McGovern's shot was deflected past the stranded keeper by Danny Smith. Unfortunately, almost straight from the restart we went behind again when the centre forward unleashed a fierce drive from an acute angle. The game was fairly even at this stage with the next goal looking to be crucial. It came from a spectacular long range strike which dipped just under the crossbar to give Darryl no chance. Conor McGovern pulled one back just before half time to make the half time team talk a bit more positive as we felt that we had every chance of getting back into the game. The rain had made the pitch very boggy and not ideal for our passing game but we did battle hard and compete well throughout the second half. Kris and Stuart both came on as we pushed forward for an equaliser. East Herts had

missed several chances to kill the game and there was always hope that we would get an equaliser right up until injury time when a fast break led to two excellent saves by Darryl but the rebound eventually fell for a tap in to complete a 4-2 defeat.