

Sunday 18th November 2007

London F.A. Sunday Intermediate Cup, Third Round Match at East Marsh, Hackney Marshes

EUREKA	4	EDMONTON ROVERS	0	HT 2-0
26, 43, 80, 88 mins.				

EUREKA'S LINE-UP: No Team Details

EDMONTON ROVERS LINE-UP (with Marks out of 10): Ozel OZERMAN (GK) (5); Terry MOORE (6), Alan BARNARD (6½), Paul WOOLSTON (6), Martin LOVEDAY (6); Nick VERTIGANS (5½), Tem ADIL (5), Clark WILLIAMS (5), Steve COKELL (5½); Conor McGOVERN (6), Tony KING (4½) **Subs.:** None !

Referee: Andrew OKOCHA

Weather Conditions: Cloudy with freezing cold wind

Attendance: 15

Factual Report

(by Laurence Hughes): We thought that the previous week's 'non-fulfilment' of a Friendly match was just a one-off due to some unfortunate circumstances with family commitments, and that this crucial London F.A. Sunday Intermediate Cup



match against a known good side would see some of our players make a bit more of an effort to attend so that we could at least field three good substitutes. However, it was not to be, and once again in this competition we had to suffer an embarrassing and demoralising defeat as a large number of our better players came up with an amazing assortment of excuses for missing this game, while others just didn't bother getting in touch at all...for the second week running. Even before the game was switched to a venue where the changing rooms and 'showers' (i.e. horse troughs) had changed little since [this picture](#) was taken when we played there back in 1976 (and the weather forecast of biting cold Easterly gale-force winds and possible torrential rain had been announced), we had players dropping out of the squad en masse. We already knew we would be without skipper Stuart Dorward and his elder brother Derek as they were up in their native Scotland watching them lose to Italy the night before...and yes, I was tempted to phone them on Saturday evening asking them to get a plane back down straight away in the knowledge (or rather hope ?) that they wouldn't be celebrating anything up there. Not much chance of that though. We also had Tony Speller dropping out with a groin strain, Robin Pryke announcing he would no longer be playing until further notice due to work & studying commitments, Paul Ellerker also announcing that he would be unable to play for the foreseeable future due to a cycling injury, and first-choice keeper Darryl Johnson suddenly being unable to play due to a

couple of family illnesses...then the evening before the game we had new signing Simon Glennie pull out with an ankle injury and Foysol Ahmed likewise with a groin strain, both of these injuries having been suffered playing 5-a-side during the week.

That was eight players missing then, and we were right in assuming it was actually ten, as Daniel Daley and the in-form Leon Mc,Kenzie-Mc,Kay had both disappeared since our last match against Lea Valley Royals and had shown no sign of getting in touch of their own accord, with Daley not replying (properly) to text messages or e-mails and Leon changing his mobile phone number (or having gone abroad ?) without telling us. That left us with a squad of just 12 as we travelled to the venue...in just 15 minutes from Edmonton in what was a really easy journey compared to some Away matches we have had in the London F.A. Cup competitions over the years. Nick Vertigans though, despite informing us that it was an easy journey for him as well from his house in Baker Street (Marylebone), went to South Marsh instead of East Marsh and thought none of our players had turned up at all, but although we seem to be heading in that direction, we were not quite that bad just yet ! That saw him eventually arrive at about 10.10.a.m., but there was still no sign of influential midfielder Danny Hagan, whose mobile phone just continually rung without any answer when we (rather frantically) tried it. As it turned out, he had to drop out as well because of a family illness on the morning of the match which saw him having to rush off to his local hospital and leave his phone behind in the panic. Unfortunately, we were unable to find that out until after the match, so we just had to get on with it with just a bare eleven, Manager Trevor Hughes as Club Linesman, and nobody on the touchline whatsoever apart from the cameraman...leaving our players bags to be rifled by passers-by behind me. (Thankfully, only Tem Adil's £5.00 Match Subs appeared to go missing).

With four real key and in-form players missing in keeper Johnson, skipper Dorward, midfielder Hagan and forward Mc,Kenzie-Mc,Kay then, not to mention several others who would have been useful substitutes, Manager Hughes and skipper for the day Paul Woolston had a real job on their hands trying to lift heads, and it didn't bode well that we were kicking 'uphill' and against the wind in the First Half. However, the pitch was in excellent condition (as they often are at Hackney Marshes) and we defended really well for most of the First Half by staying deep and keeping possession with some neat triangles instead of just trying to hoof the ball downfield where it would just come straight back at us. Unfortunately though, without us having any pace up front, we didn't look remotely like getting behind their defence against the wind in the First Half and we were forced into dropping Tony King back into midfield for the rest of the match fairly early on to make it a 4-5-1.

Eureka only really had a couple of chances in the first 25 minutes, so we were doing quite well considering they were one of the top teams in the Premier Division of the [Hackney & Leyton Sunday League](#) (which is quite a strong one) and had only lost 2-1 to Trent Park (Arkay) from our League in the Semi-Finals of this competition last season. However, with the diminutive Ozel Ozerman in goal in such windy conditions, we knew it was bound to happen that the opposition would score a 'fluke' goal over his head at some stage of the match, and sure enough, in the 26th minute an over-hit wind-assisted cross flew into the far top corner to put Eureka 1-0 up, which



was well-deserved on the balance of play, but a sickener for us all the same.

By that stage, Clark Williams was struggling with a head injury which had seen him leave the field for a few minutes and in danger of having to stay off for the rest of the match,

which suddenly brought back nasty memories of when we lost 5-1 to Dees in the London Sunday Challenge Cup a few seasons ago when a game-ending injury to Conor McGovern when we had a bare eleven saw us end up totally outclassed and an eventual laughing stock. The difference on that occasion though was that Paul Woolston and a number of others were extremely pissed after various parties the night before, but that wasn't the case this time and our pre-match warm-up and a much better attitude all round helped us to stay in contention as Half-Time approached. However, in the 43rd minute, the same player who scored Eureka's first goal unleashed a fierce wind-assisted 25-yard drive through a crowd of players and into the roof of the net (above Ozel Ozerman's head again) to put them 2-0 up at the break and with us having no substitutes, we already knew the game was probably over.

At least it was a chance for the likes of Tem Adil and Tony King to have a full match and show what they could do, and King should have pulled a goal back in the 53rd minute when he got on the end of Adil's low cross but his finish was indecisive and the Eureka keeper made a good save diving at his feet. That actually turned out to be our only clear-cut chance of the match, but if it had gone in, we may well have gone on to create a lot more with the wind behind us in the Second Half. Things only got worse for us after that though, with Terry Moore getting himself booked shortly afterwards for a clumsy challenge and Eureka bringing on three quality substitutes who were all probably [Essex Senior League](#) players, as were most of their starting line-up. Of course we didn't have anybody playing at that level in our side and although we got into their half a lot with the wind behind us, their defenders were far too big, quick and strong for us and we didn't look remotely like getting a decent shot in, while they gradually started hitting us on the break and having numerous clear-cut chances. Fortunately for us, they were guilty of some terrible bad misses, but Ozel Ozerman gifted them a third goal in the 80th minute anyway to kill the game off as he passed the ball out straight to an opposing forward who said 'thank you very much' and finished with ease. At least Oz redeemed himself slightly with a couple of good saves coming quickly off his line...which he is actually better at than any of our other goalkeepers, but our heads went down badly after that mistake for the third goal and we were absolutely woeful in the last 10 minutes and could easily have lost by 6 or 7 without reply. Thankfully, Eureka only managed one more goal...in the 88th minute when the ball was lashed into the far top corner from just inside the area after we had made about 10 unsuccessful attempts to clear our lines in the space of about 30 seconds, but in general we had defended quite well in this match and our back four were not at fault and were our best players on the day.

Basically, they were just too good for us in other areas of the pitch, and even if we had been fielding a full-strength side in this match, we may well have lost, although it probably would have been a very close game. Unfortunately this was no contest...and while we look for some new players, Eureka will probably go on to win the competition, like most teams do when they knock us out.

TREVOR HUGHES'S MANAGER'S REPORT

Our ever changing squad meant that I had several starting XIs and formations in my mind during the week for our important London Cup tie against Eureka at Hackney Marshes. However, by 10.30 a.m. on Sunday I was left with a squad of 11. Captain Stuart Dorward and brother Derek had gone to Scotland to see their fatherland lose and goalkeeper Darryl Johnson had to pull out for family reasons. Leon McKenzie-McKay and Daniel Daley had gone missing during the week and influential midfielder Danny Hagan disappeared on Sunday morning. Simon Glennie was due to make a debut at left back but injured himself on Saturday when it was too late to recal Stuart Byhurst from a trip up north. Nevertheless, we did have a reserve keeper with Ozel Ozerman deputising for Darryl and the back four of Terry Moore, Paul Woolston, Alan Barnard and Martin Loveday were all regulars. Tem Adil came into the centre of midfield to partner Clark Williams and Tony King came in to partner Conor McGovern up front with Steve Cokell and Nick Vertigans making up the midfield four.

Eureka were a very fit and strong side who played good passing football. We had to defend very well to keep them out and after 20 minutes I decided to bring Tony King back to make a 5 man midfield as we had very little possession. Unfortunately, the crucial first goal was a fluke as a deep cross from a free kick sailed with the wind into the top corner of the net giving Oz no chance. We continued to defend well until a second goal went in just before half time from a fierce shot following a corner. Our best chance of the game fell to Tony King after 53 minutes from an excellent cross from Tem Adil but the keeper blocked it and, although we kept trying we created very little. The killer goal came after a poor clearance by Oz after 80

minutes led to an easy finish and a last minute goal made the final score 4-0. It was a bit frustrating because we had so many key players missing but Eureka were a good side and it will be interesting to see how they get on in future rounds as we have lost to the eventual winners in each of the last three years.