

Tuesday 13th April 2004 (40 Minutes
Each Way)

Mercury Waltham Sunday League (Premier Division) Match at the Old Owens Sports Ground, Northaw

F.C. BOCA HILL

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EDMONTON ROVERS

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HT 1-0

Bright (17 mins.),
Elliott (76 mins.)

F.C. Boca Hill's Line-Up: Gary HAWKES (GK); Jeff GOUMAL, Mark PRITCHETT, Scott BYLES; Lou CHRISTIFIDES, Paul WACKETT, Jez WARNER, Neil BARNES; Ollie FUSCO; Jamie BRIGHT, Dave ELLIOTT
Subs.: Rob ABRAHAMS (GK), Pete STANNERS

Edmonton Rovers Line-Up (with Marks out of 10): Darryl JOHNSON (GK) (7); Chidi IBEKWEM (6½), Stuart DORWARD (7), Paul WOOLSTON (7), Tony SPELLER (6); Foyso! AHMED (6), Leon Mc,KENZIE-Mc,KAY (7), Eric IBEKWEM (6½), Chris BEEDEN (6½), Derek DORWARD (6); Steve COKELL (6) **Subs.:** Brian KAMUTEKU (7), Lexton HARRISON (6)

Referee: Ian ANDREWS

Weather Conditions: Dry & Sunny. No Wind

Attendance: 20



Report: F.C. Boca Hill came into this game needing a win to remain in contention for the Premier Division title, while a draw or a win for us would see Brimsdown Rovers clinch the title as a result. That meant all the pressure was on Boca Hill and we could just relax and enjoy ourselves in this match, while at the same time giving more valuable First Team experience to Reserve Team players Foyso! Ahmed, Leon Mc,Kenzie-Mc,Kay, Brian Kamuteku and Lexton Harrison. Unfortunately though, because of work commitments ruling out Conor Mc,Govern, Peter Sutton and Gary Adamson amongst others, we had to make no less than six changes to our starting line up after our excellent 2-1 win over White Hart only two days earlier, and although the return of First Team regulars such as Darryl Johnson, Stuart Dorward, Derek Dorward, Steve Cokell & Tony Speller obviously strengthened the side, we struggled with our teamwork early on and Boca Hill, who were fielding a stronger side than when they beat us 4-2 at Hazelwood back in January, had by

far the better of the First Half with their 3-4-1-2 formation causing us a lot of problems. That saw Darryl Johnson have to make three or four good saves in the first 25 minutes, all as a result of slick one and two-touch passing moves catching out our rather sluggish-looking defence, and indeed that was how Boca Hill took the lead in the 17th minute when Eric and Chidi Ibekwem were both forced into errors which saw Jamie Bright produce a good finish in a one-on-one with Darryl Johnson after being put through by his strike partner Dave Elliott.

We then managed to hang on for a bit without conceding another goal though and then gradually started creating chances ourselves on the break with our 4-5-1 system catching Boca Hill out at the back, particularly with Leon Mc,Kenzie-Mc,Kay and Derek Dorward running through unchallenged from midfield. In fact 'Del' really should have equalised when he found himself clean through with only Boca's second-choice keeper Gary Hawkes to beat, but he sent a feeble sidefooted shot well wide. That turned out to be by far our best chance of the half, but it worried Boca Hill enough that they felt it was necessary to change their formation to a 3-1-4-2 for the Second Half and bring on their first-choice keeper Rob Abrahams at Half-Time, Abrahams being a regular for top Spartan South Midlands League side Potters Bar Town on Saturdays (along with their midfielder Paul Wackett, although he was strangely taken off at Half-Time after causing us a lot of problems playing just behind their two forwards). Although we had Chris 'Nugget' Beeden playing in this match (who also plays at that level on Saturdays), it seemed to suggest that Boca Hill thought they should have been 'dominating' the match more than they had been already just because we were below mid-table in the Premier Division and because they had 'pissed all over us' back in January when we fielded a side who were all badly unfit after not playing for a month. The difference this time though, was that three of our midfielders in Foyso! Ahmed, Leon Mc,Kenzie-Mc,Kay and Eric Ibekwem were all young enough and fit enough to put Boca Hill's midfielders under pressure as soon as they got the ball and changing their formation therefore proved to be a big mistake on their part, particularly when Brian Kamuteku came on to replace Foyso! 12 minutes into the Second Half, as Brian was in his 'Vieira Impersonation' mood this time after having had a few quiet games for the Reserves recently. In fact Brian was so keen that he was actually the first to arrive at the ground, while Chris Beeden was more motivated than normal because he was playing against one of his old schoolmates in Boca's Ollie Fusco. That saw us dominate the Second Half right from the start in an amazing role reversal...much to the interest of a few Brimsdown players and officials on the touchline no doubt...and we created chances galore but just couldn't find the net, the main culprit being Steve Cokell, who along with Derek Dorward and Tony Speller looked badly rusty after missing too many matches recently due to holidays and family or social commitments. In fact Cokell had three or four chances where he found himself clean through after Boca's central defenders seemingly nervous about heading away huge long punts downfield from Darryl Johnson and frequently missing the ball completely !, while other chances created saw shots cleared

off the line, crosses whizzing through the six-yard box without anyone getting a touch, a Paul Woolston header going wide from right in front of goal and keeper Abrahams being 'allowed' to make saves from shots which should have been buried. Boca Hill though, hardly had any chances at all in the Second Half until we decided to gamble by bringing on forward Lexton Harrison for Chris Beeden with 14 minutes to go and revert to a 4-4-2. That saw the game become a bit more 'end to end', but it was Boca who killed the game off with four minutes to go when Darryl Johnson could only parry a 'whipped-in' cross from the right straight to the feet of Dave Elliott who finished easily from 6 yards.

For some reason Boca Hill midfielder Neil Barnes then got himself sent off for a second bookable show of dissent before the game re-started after that goal though, but we were a bit too deflated after playing so well before that 'killer' goal that it didn't make any difference and with the game only being of 80 minutes duration anyway because it was an evening match without floodlights we didn't have time to come back from that.

Although we lost...mainly because we are not scoring enough goals once again, there were a lot of positives from this match regarding the promising performances of our Reserve Team players, and on this evidence they can play regularly in the Premier Division next season without us getting relegated.