

Sunday 27th August 2006

Pre-Season Friendly Match at the Country Club, Cheshunt

FLAMSTEAD END	1	EDMONTON ROVERS	5	HT 1-2
<i>Smith (6 mins.)</i>		<i>S.Dorward (Pen.) (7 mins.), Spyrou (16 mins.), D.Dorward (60, 70 mins.), McGovern (69 mins.)</i>		

FLAMSTEAD END'S LINE-UP: Matt GUINCHARD; Kevin BOURKE, Paul BOURKE, Gavin LIVERMORE, Paul KENNEY; Chris DUKES, Grant DRABWELL, Dave KENNEY, Michael LOCK, Danny ADAMS; Ross SMITH **Sub.:** Tony AVERY

EDMONTON ROVERS LINE-UP (with Marks out of 10): Jon RICE (GK) (6½); Colin BESTER (6½), Andrew WARMERDAM (6), Stuart DORWARD (7), Terry MOORE (6½); Kris SPYROU (7½), Paul ELLERKER (7½), Clark WILLIAMS (7½), Peter MURPHY (7); Conor McGOVERN (7), Derek DORWARD (8) **Subs.:** Danny HAGAN (7), Bobby RANDALL (7), Tem ADIL (6½)

Referee: Barry GROSSMITH

Weather Conditions: Warm & Sunny

Attendance: 22

Factual Report (by Laurence Hughes): When we last arranged a Pre-Season Friendly for the late-August Bank Holiday Weekend (in August 2004 against Ridsen Wood Reserves), it was a bit of a disaster as we ended up with just a bare eleven despite having enough players to field two teams initially! In that bare eleven were two or three players who were not really good enough and we were fortunate to lose that match by only a one-goal margin. We therefore knew we were taking a bit of a risk in arranging this game then, but a recent influx of good new players for the Summer 7-a-side League fortunately resulted in us fielding a squad of 14 this time, all of whom were 'half-decent' ability-wise and in fairly good shape fitness-wise. That was despite us having no less than eight regular/'first-choice' players unavailable, along with two or three other possible new players, mainly because of the usual Bank Holiday family commitments. Our opponents, Flamstead End, had finished third in the Mercury Waltham Sunday League last season to gain Division Two for the coming campaign, and although never played them before, our now-defunct Reserve hammered 9-0 by them the season before last. though, Colin Bester was the only survivor from that for this match, while Flamstead End only turned up substitute (instead of our three) and with several of players missing because of social commitments. didn't stop them taking the lead after just 6 minutes



Division Four of promotion to our First Team had Side had been Fortunately game in our squad with one their better However, that when a mix-up in



defence between Stuart Dorward and our 18-year-old debutant goalkeeper Jon Rice resulted in their lone forward Ross Smith nipping in to intercept Stuart's backpass and score from an acute angle with Jon caught on his heels. If that was Stuart's fault, fortunately he made amends just a minute later though, when he converted from the penalty spot to make it 1-1 after a foul on his brother Derek in the area in by defender Paul Bourke.

We were only marginally the better side after that as the game was played at a frantic pace early on with time and space on the ball difficult to find and with several nasty bobbles on the over-used playing surface not helping, especially for Stuart Dorward, who did three or four examples of his famous 'Geoff Thomas playing for England' mis-kicks, much to the

amusement of former players Lee Osborn, Steve Beasley, John Beasley, Paul Rebauro & Russell Beeden on the touchline. However, we managed to go into a 2-1 lead after just 16 minutes when the much-improved Kris Spyrou, who was one of five teenagers in our squad for this game, ran onto Derek Dorward's through ball and showed some impressive control and composure with his finishing in a one-on-one with Flamstead End keeper Matt Guinchard.

The rest of the First Half rather fizzled out though, with the only other chances of note being a Paul Ellerker header from a corner that scraped the top of the crossbar, while Jon Rice did well for us up the other end with a good save from a Chris Dukes free-kick, but we deserved our 2-1 lead at Half-Time on the balance of play.

That signalled a change in personnel for the start of the Second Half with 18-year-old former Leyton Orient trainee Danny Hagan and ex-Everest defender Bobby Randall coming on for their debuts along with Tem Adil, while key midfielder Paul Ellerker was one of those who had to come off to take a breather (and a few roll-ups), Ellerker being the only player to have not played any football at all during the Summer and obviously feeling the heat. Perhaps not surprisingly, Flamstead End started having a few chances as our players got to know each other, but keeper Jon Rice kept them out with two or three good saves, although he admitted afterwards that he was a bit nervous and he certainly rode his luck on a few occasions. He wasn't helped by some of our more experienced defenders not playing quite as well as we know than can do, but a 10-minute spell of excellent football half-way through the Second Half was to kill Flamstead End off when it all 'clicked' for us and we scored three quick goals to go into a 5-1 lead. The first of those came in the 60th minute when man-of-the-match Derek Dorward scored an early Goal Of The Season contender with a long-



range left-footed shot into the top corner after a perfect lay-off into his path from his strike partner Conor McGovern, then nine minutes later Conor scored himself when he headed in Bobby Randall's perfectly-flighted cross and just a minute after that, Del toe-poked in his second of the match past the oncoming keeper after running onto Terry Moore's 'quality' through ball...this goal coming after an excellent 5-man move which could well be another Goal Of The Season contender (having now seen it on video...I don't think our supporters on the touchline, including Manager Trevor Hughes, realised at the time !?).

We could have had more goals, but that would have flattered us as Flamstead End were not a bad side but our finishing was good on this occasion...in stark contrast to last season in Division One. The most encouraging aspect of this performance was how well the three new players and the returning Clark Williams slotted in...Williams having only played 5 games for the Reserves in his previous spell with the club, but being an obvious Division One-quality player, as are Bobby Randall, Danny Hagan and the eight players who missed this match !

At the moment then, things are looking good for Season 2006-2007, and maybe we might have a strong enough squad to win a trophy at last. The last time we managed **that** (at the 11-a-side game) was before five of our players in this match were even born !!!

'Murf's Alternative Report !!: With the Gallic headbutt and Sven's butthead approach a mere fading summer memory, Rovers returned to the fray with a pre-season at friendly at Division Two side Flamstead End. The conditions were reminiscent of Germany 2006 - windless and warm - and Rovers fielded an experienced side peppered with a few new signings. On the bench were full back Bobby Randall and midfielder Danny Hagan while young Jon Rice started in goal in place of Darryl Johnson. The Johnson boots are big ones to fill and so, it appeared, was his shirt as it seemingly dripped off Rice like a Dali painting. In the early stages Rovers displayed a few rusty touches as they attempted to play their football. This was perhaps best personified by skipper Stuart Dorward's uncharacteristically short back pass in the 6th minute. With 'keeper Rice stranded in no man's land with a face that yelled "this wasn't on the recruitment poster", a Flamstead forward finished neatly from an acute angle. This brought hoots of derision from the watching pack of hyenas comprising the Beeden brothers, Paul Rebauro and Lee Osborn. With the venue once being patronised by a certain well known supermarket, no doubt the latter pair owed their presence to telling their respective bosses they were just popping down Tescos. But they were soon silenced as Rovers and their skipper struck back almost immediately. Derek Dorward was upended in the area and brother Stuart stepped up to convert.

The game then settled and Rovers began to gain the upper hand driven on by central midfield pairing Paul Ellerker and Clark Williams. Then, in the 16th minute, the improving Kris Spyrou was put through by Derek Dorward to finish like a natural. However, despite dominating possession for the remainder of the half, Rovers could not add to the 2-1 score line. At the break, water was taken on board and Manager Hughes dispensed familiar words of maintaining commitment to playing football. Looking heavenward from behind his reactalites, he also opined that Flamstead would surely wilt in the conditions.

The second half saw Rovers kill off the game in a 10 minute spell beginning on the hour mark. First Derek Dorward's left leg managed to synchronise with the run of the ball to despatch an unstoppable shot into the top right hand corner. Then Conor McGovern's hard work was rewarded with a header from Bobby Randall's right wing cross. And finally, Terry Moore's long, low pass from full back rode a succession of hillocks and valleys to find Derek Dorward in hot pursuit. Rovers' forward capitalised on a moment's hesitation by the home 'keeper to apply the deadliest of toe ends to secure a satisfying 5-1 victory.

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TREVOR HUGHES'S MANAGER'S REPORT

After several recent good performances in the 7 a side league we played an 11 a side friendly against Flamstead End on Sunday with a squad of 14 available. John Rice, who had made one appearance in the 7 a side league, was making his debut in goal and conceded after just 6 minutes. However, the fault lay with captain, Stuart Dorward, for an awful back pass which was pounced on by an alert Flamstead End forward. Stuart made amends just a minute later in converting a penalty awarded after a trip on brother Derek. We took the lead after 16 minutes through the much improved Kris Spyrou who ran onto a Derek Dorward through ball, rounded a defender and drove his shot into the top corner. Half time substitutions gave debuts to Bobby Randall and Danny Hagan and we controlled the game with some good possession football. Three goals in a 10 minute spell from Derek Dorward 2 and Conor McGovern gave us a 5-1 lead. John Rice did have to make a few good saves but we held on comfortably to secure a confidence boosting win. Everyone played well and, with several players missing, the competition for places with a bigger squad than in previous seasons should help our performance once the league season starts in September.