

Sunday 18th January 2004

Mercury Waltham Sunday League (Division Four) Match at Wormley Playing Fields

I.M.L. RED COW

3

EDMONTON ROVERS
RESERVES

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HT 1-0

Syrett (15, 55 mins),
Burnham (Own Goal) (90 mins.)

I.M.L. Red Cow's Line-Up: Andrew FAIRCLOUGH; Chris HUMPHRYS, Jamie NICHOLSON, Andrew CHAPMAN, Dom ALLUM; Gary BONE, Enzo VULLO, Michael FANTIS, Marc POFFLEY; Paul GIROLAMI, Rob SYRETT **Sub.:** Lee NICHOLSON

Edmonton Rovers Line-Up (with Marks out of 10): Darryl JOHNSON (GK) (7); Billy BURNHAM (6), Matt STEELL (7), Scott ROBERTSON (6), Terry DELLER (6); Myron Mc,KAY (6), Brian KAMUTEKU (6½), Leon Mc,KENZIE-Mc,KAY (6½), Barry MATTHEWS (6); Lexton HARRISON (6½), Derek DORWARD (6) **Subs.:** Jerome HARRISON (6), Tony SPELLER (6½), Ali AHMED (6)

Referee: Phil GISSING

Weather Conditions: Sunny & Dry

Attendance: 12



Report: Yet again the Reserve Team ended up playing when the First Team had to suffer another annoying postponement...and yet again it was another opportunity wasted for them to actually score a goal in front of the video camera, most of their goals this season having been scored for them by First Team players of course !

With Lee Osborn and Paul Rebairo visiting their old schoolmate 'Sully' in South London over the weekend and Lee Bazzoni dropping out the night before with any one of four excuses ranging from not having a car, not wanting to miss Arsenal Live on T.V. at 2.00, being 'too pissed' and (best of all ?) having a tattoo done !, we were therefore without three key players for this match, so Lexton Harrison was named as Captain, while First Team players Derek Dorward and Tony Speller were drafted in to play (or be brought on as a substitute) in preference to Mashood Burahee and Foyso Ahmed, who were always going to be too inexperienced to be given a run-out against an I.M.L.

Red Cow side who are undoubtedly one of the favourites for the Division Four Title. In fact even Billy Burnham was included in the starting line-up because of that, despite him announcing on the Forum during the week that he would not be playing again this season due to some sort of leg infection and almost breaking the bathroom scales when he last weighed himself !

Burnham though, was played as a right-back in this match despite his lack of pace, while Barry Matthews, Myron Mc,Kay and Derek Dorward were all (for some reason) played in positions other than that which they prefer. However, despite that, we gave I.M.L. Red Cow a real shock in the first 5 minutes when we created three clear-cut chances, mainly as a result of Lexton Harrison's strength and pace, but on each occasion the ball flew across the 6-yard box and ended up going off for a throw-in after various players had either totally missed the ball in front of an open goal with wild 'air-shots', tried to cross it instead of shooting...from *inside* the 6-yard box !!, or allowed it to bounce off their shins thanks to a severe lack of technique in being able to cushion the ball.

With I.M.L. Red Cow's players turning up a bit late and appearing to be a bit pissed with some serious coughing, farting and belching noises going on all over the pitch, we suddenly had visions of producing a shock result, but we soon slipped into our usual ways of giving the ball away with some sloppy passing and being caught in possession in midfield, although it was a poor kick-out from Darryl Johnson which saw us go a goal down after only 15 minutes as Rob Syrett capitalised to lob him quite easily from 12 yards.

The rest of the First Half then saw us struggle to get out of our own half and having to face no less than 13 corners, many of them being given away by poor control on behalf of our defenders, but we somehow managed to get away without conceding a goal from any of them this time (more by luck than judgement though) thanks to some scrambled clearances and the occasional save by Darryl.

Fortunately though, we managed to come off at Half-Time only 1-0 down and Manager Mark Howley seemed quite pleased with that, even though it didn't look as if we had played as well as in recent matches. The pattern then continued in the Second Half though, with I.M.L. Red Cow generally on top without really seeming to extend themselves. In fact, with virtually all of their players playing for Cheshunt Reserves on Saturdays, they definitely appeared to be treating this match as a bit of a stroll in comparison, which is presumably why they have somehow managed to drop eight points in Division 4 so far this season against other clubs who are obviously inferior technically.

We then started having some injury problems early in the Second Half though and almost as soon as Myron Mc,Kay limped off in the 52nd minute with a hip/back problem after falling awkwardly in an aerial challenge (to be replaced by Jerome Harrison), I.M.L. Red Cow made it 2-0 when defender Chris Humphrys suddenly decided to 'up a gear' and hit a precision

60-yard long ball with backspin over Terry Deller's head for Rob Syrett to beat sweeper Matt Steell to the ball and finish clinically in a one-on-one with Darryl Johnson. With Deller being seriously outpaced for that, he was soon hauled off to be replaced at left-back by somebody who could sprint marginally faster, namely Tony Speller !?, but we had a real setback in the 72nd minute when Matt Steell, who had been our best defender (as usual), pulled a hamstring and had to be substituted by Ali Ahmed, who's first touch of the ball was an ungainly toe-poked slice straight into an opponent's 'nuts' when he had plenty of time to control the ball, compose himself and pass it to feet. By then though, I.M.L. Red Cow's players had already started pissing themselves laughing at how poor some of our players were...and that incident *really* started them off, which was a bit annoying, but then we only had ourselves to blame as once again we had too many players not really playing to their true potential. In fact I.M.L. Red Cow's attitude and style of play actually brought back memories of what it must have been like for our *First Team* when *they* were playing in the lower Divisions in the early/mid-90's and the likes of John Beasley, Chris Beeden and Kevin Dedman were doing exactly the same thing to Goffs Oak Comrades, Old Star Rangers and Somerset Ambury Reserves (amongst others).

Unfortunately though, most of our current Reserve Team still have a lot to learn about playing Sunday League Football, especially Brian Kamuteku, who actually forgot he was playing football in the 77th minute and reverted to his more natural sport of basketball...this of course earning him a booking and an £8.00 Fine from the London F.A. as it stopped I.M.L. Red Cow skipper Michael Fantis heading towards goal where he probably would have forced Darryl Johnson into another one of numerous saves he was having to make.

However, I.M.L. Red Cow actually started getting too casual defensively as the game went on (probably because they were laughing so much at Ali & Brian...amongst others) and we had three or four good chances to pull a goal back with Derek Dorward uncharacteristically squandering two of them, while Ali also had a shot towards the end (sliced wide of course). With a lack of pace at the back though, it was always likely that we would concede another goal, but I.M.L. Red Cow left it until the last minute to score their third, when Rob Syrett got away again to send in a low cross-shot from the left which was diverted into his own net by Billy Burnham at the near post for what will have to go down as an Own Goal...thereby denying Syrett the hat-trick he probably deserved.

Once again then, it was the usual story of the Reserves just being slightly out of their depth against the top teams in Division Four at the moment, with a difference in finishing being the biggest problem, and with other clubs at the bottom winning again, relegation is looking ever more likely.