

Sunday 22nd February 2004					
Mercury Waltham Sunday League, Roy Bailey Challenge Cup Fourth Round Match at Larsens Recreation Ground, Waltham Abbey					
LARSENS	2	EDMONTON ROVERS	3	HT 2-1	
Jackson (1, 33 mins.)		Mc,Govern (5, 72 mins.), S.Dorward (56 (Pen.) mins.)			

Larsens Line-Up John HICKMAN (GK); Jason DOWNER, Russell BARWICK, Daniel O'CONNELL, Richard HODGE; Stuart JOHNSON, Neil Mc,KELLAR, Dave MARRION, Wayne DANIELS; Craig JACKSON, Danny ADAMS **Subs.:** Sam TAYLOR, Gary KILLINGTON

Edmonton Rovers Line-Up (with Marks out of 10): Darryl JOHNSON (GK) (6½); Tony SPELLER (6½), Stuart DORWARD (7½), Paul WOOLSTON (7½), Steve BEASLEY (7); Eric IBEKWEM (6½), Paul ELLERKER (6½), Marco ELLERKER (7), Peter SUTTON (7); Conor Mc,GOVERN (7), Derek DORWARD (6½) **Sub. Used:** John BEASLEY (7)

Referee: Melvyn PATEMAN **Weather Conditions:** Freezing Cold Strong Wind **Attendance:** 15



Report: Following an earlier visit to Larsens Recreation Ground this season when the changing rooms were shut and we had to make a last-minute excursion to Town Mead instead, our players all made sure they turned up at the venue in good time on this occasion just in case there were any similar problems. This time though, it was Referee Melvyn Pateman's fault that the game kicked off at 10.45.a.m. instead of the designated 10.30., as despite refereeing in the League for a number of years, he apparently 'didn't have a clue' where Larsens Recreation Ground was and initially went to another venue instead (presumably Town Mead ?) ! With the players of both sides being a lot more organised than that by being out on the pitch by 10.20.a.m. trying to warm up in a temperature of about -20°C ('Wind-chill' factor included !), this was very frustrating and annoying, especially for the numerous players on our side who had arranged various family commitments for the afternoon in assuming that the game would kick-off on time and also not go to Extra-Time and a Penalty Shoot-Out on the basis that our opponents were only a Division Two side !



In fact it took Larsens just 21 seconds to remind our players that it took us years to get out of that Division and the quality in there is not quite as far off the standard of the Premier Division as we might have imagined, although when Craig Jackson lobbed Darryl Johnson to give them that lead, it came from some comical defending that Dean Richards and Gary Doherty obviously got their ideas from later in the afternoon !? (Having now studied video footage, it was Stuart Dorward, Steve Beasley (mainly) and Darryl Johnson who were all at fault, as Manager Trevor Hughes wasn't expecting us to do something like that in the first minute and was looking away at the time !).

With Larsens beating us 4-0 the last time we played them back in February 2000 (when we went into that game expecting to beat them 4-0 !) and with most of their line-up in this game being either current or former players of Essex Senior League side Waltham Abbey on Saturdays, it looked a very ominous sign, but Conor Mc,Govern soon showed them some Premier Division

class by equalising with a good finish at the far post just five minutes later after Larsens defender Jason Downer had headed Paul Woolston's free-kick backwards straight to him and then Peter Sutton nearly put us in front just three minutes later with a close-range shot from Mc,Govern's through ball which cannoned down off the underside of the crossbar and away to safety. However, with the strength of the wind and the badly churned-up pitch not making it easy for us, we then committed three more laughable defensive howlers during the First Half, one of which saw a Larsens player hit the post, another one resulting in a bad miss (after a dreadful mis-kick by Tony Speller ?) and the third one (in the 33rd minute) resulting in them regaining the lead as Craig Jackson lobbed the stranded Darryl Johnson again after somehow finding himself clean through. Although we had quite a few chances ourselves in the First Half, we had to start the Second Half 2-1 down and really needed to raise our game, but Larsens came out even *more* determined after the break and had two or three half-chances early on. However, in an effort to be more competitive, they mistimed numerous tackles (without being deliberately 'dirty' though) and that saw them end up with four players being yellow carded, while a rash challenge on Eric Ibekwem in the area in the 56th minute by midfielder Wayne Daniels saw us equalise again to make it 2-2 thanks to Stuart Dorward's confidently-struck penalty which sent keeper John Hickman the wrong way. With John Beasley then coming on 10 minutes later for Eric Ibekwem, we started to really get on top for the first time in the match and when 'Junior' was brought down in

the 72nd minute for one of numerous free-kicks in dangerous positions, Paul Woolston then forced keeper Hickman into a sprawling save, but Conor McGovern was on hand to bundle in the rebound for what turned out to be the winner. Although this was yet another match where we have not played anything like the standards we set last season, the main thing was that we deserved to win the match (just about !?) and we will now be making a very rare appearance in the Roy Bailey Challenge Cup Quarter-Finals...albeit after only playing one match in this season's competition so far ! (Thank you Broxbourne Rangers for not being able to field a side in the Third Round !).