

Sunday 3rd April 2005

Mercury Waltham Sunday League Division Four Match at Hazelwood Sports Ground

EDMONTON ROVERS RESERVES	0	NORTHMET (RIVERSIDE) RESERVES	7	HT 0-4
		Jones (8 mins.), Brien (15, 75 mins.), Hodgson (24, 58, 91 mins.), Penn (Pen.) (35 mins.)		

EDMONTON ROVERS RESERVES' LINE-UP (with Marks out of 10): Gary COKELL (GK) (7½); Daniel GEORGE (6½), Ritchie COPUES (5½), Scott ROBERTSON (5), Terry DELLER (5½); Chris MORRISH (5½), Barry MATTHEWS (5½), Tony SPELLER (5½), Tem ADIL (6); Myron Mc,KAY (5½), Steve COKELL (6½) **Subs.:** John BEASLEY (6), FoysoL AHMED (5½), Russell BEEDEN (5½)

NORTHMET (RIVERSIDE) RESERVES' LINE-UP: Andy VERDIN (GK); Mick ENRIGHT, Rob CLOWES, Steve PENN, Jack SANGER; Dave DANIEL, Sean DAVIN, Jamie JONES, Chris HIGGINS; Rory BRIEN, Kyle HODGSON **Subs.:** Dan SAVAGE, Mark HARPER

Referee: Paul FAITHFULL

Weather Conditions: Dry & Warm

Attendance: 14

Report (By Laurence Hughes):

Northmet (Riverside) Reserves came into this match needing just two more wins from their two remaining fixtures to clinch the Division Four title by one point from White Hart Reserves. Although both their First Team (in the Premier Division) and their 'A' Team (in Division Six) were also playing on the same date, Northmet still managed to field a much stronger side than the over-confident one they put out against our Reserves back in January when we managed to gain our only point of the season so



far...by some sort of miracle ! Indeed their whole starting line-up *this* time consisted of fit, strong and quick players with their equivalents of Scott Robertson, Terry Deller, Ritchie Copues and Russell Beeden left on the sidelines as either substitutes or injury victims, thereby creating a mis-match which was apparent right from the kick-off. In fact the first 15 minutes of the game saw Northmet score twice, hit the bar once and force Gary Cokell into three useful saves from other clear-cut chances and our pre-match optimism that we could give them a close game soon flew out of the window. With our First Team not having a game, thereby enabling us to field a full squad of 14 once again, we mistakenly

thought we might have a chance of another upset with Steve Cokell and skipper Tony Speller in the starting line-up and another First Team-quality player in John Beasley 'on the bench', but Cokell had only just returned from a six-month backpacking trip to Australasia during the week and only added to the long list of 'fatties and crocks' we had playing in this match because of that, and the possibility of him scoring a hat-trick in this game to become the Reserve Team's eventual Top Goalscorer this season in his one and only appearance was never really on...much to our disappointment, as that would have been highly amusing.

Although we were missing the likes of Lee Osborn (Social commitments in the French Riviera Huddersfield), Peter White (Working), Colin Bester (Ineligible after playing in too many First Team matches recently) and any sort of proper goalkeeper, we were still expecting our defensive line-up for this match to be capable enough as they had plenty of experience, while 16-year-old Daniel George had benefited from a couple of recent run-outs as a substitute for the First Team. However, when referee Paul Faithfull gave Northmet a free-kick wide on the right in the 8th minute instead of allowing them a clear advantage to cross the ball, we thought that decision would benefit us, but Ritchie Copues couldn't seem to jump higher than about two inches when challenging Jamie Jones in the air (presumably because he was still clearly trying to play through a long-standing ankle injury ?), leaving Jones with a free header to put his side 1-0 up.

Northmet's second goal in the 15th minute saw us get into another bad mix-up with Terry Deller and stand-in goalkeeper Gary Cokell both at fault in dealing with a long ball, leaving Rory Brien with an easy tap-in, but Scott Robertson then made an even worse mistake in the 24th minute when he tried to control the ball in defence and was easily dispossessed by the lightning quick

Kyle Hodgson, who easily beat Gary Cokell in a one-on-one to make it 3-0. Northmet then made it 4-0 in the 35th minute when skipper Steve Penn confidently dispatched a penalty into the roof of the net after Terry Deller had scythed down a forward with a late challenge for which he was lucky not to get booked, despite his (and Tony Speller's) ridiculous protests that a penalty should not have been given because the forward actually managed to get a shot in (which trickled along the ground straight at Gary Cokell because of the late challenge).

In addition to conceding those four goals, we failed to manage a single worthwhile shot at goal in the First Half despite having a strong wind behind us and also having the privilege of playing on the First Team's pitch at Hazelwood



for a change, which was obviously a better surface for passing the ball around on. In fact it was arguably the worst 45 minutes of football the Reserves had conjured up all season and Caretaker-Manager Russell Beeden was 'really angry' at Half-Time, although it was Harry and Jack (the Dorward Cousins) on the touchline who started crying. Thankfully, on this occasion Lee Osborn was not present, otherwise we would most certainly have suffered the 'Mother of all Rants' !!! 'Tarby' responded by immediately bringing on John Beasley for Terry Deller for the start of the Second Half, with Scott Robertson, Ritchie Copues, Barry Matthews and even Tony Speller all fortunate to stay on !

That didn't stop Northmet going 5-0 up in the 58th minute though when another poor/non-existent challenge from Ritchie Copues from a corner allowed Kyle Hodgson to easily score his second, but at least we looked more like getting a shot in ourselves with 'Junior' playing in a central midfield role and he set up Steve Cokell with a good through ball half-way through the half which forced Northmet keeper Andy Verdin into his only worthwhile save of the match.

It was inevitable that we would then have to make further substitutions sooner or later as half our team were struggling to run because of the hindrance of various knee supports, cycling shorts, corsets and er, 'weight problems', so Foyso Ahmed and the even more overweight Russell Beeden then came on for Myron Mc,Kay (who was suffering from 'cramp') and Ritchie Copues (who was suffering from embarrassment) in the 67th minute and of course that saw Northmet score two more goals with Rory Brien scoring his second and their 6th in the 75th minute after a bad mistake by Tony Speller left him clean through, while Kyle Hodgson completed his hat-trick to

make it 7-0 in the first minute of injury time with a spectacular long-range shot, this being the only one of Northmet's goals which we had not set up for them !

However, for all that, we were indebted to Gary Cokell for a string of excellent saves when Northmet *did* actually conjure up good moves of their own accord, particularly in the Second Half, and because of that, 7-0 was actually a fair scoreline on the balance of play.

All in all, it was another dreadful performance by the Reserves, with heads going down all over the pitch because of catastrophic defensive blunders and with very few decent passing moves being strung together. Also, and as usual, there was very little sign of a Reserve Team goal actually being scored on video, even though we were fielding a half-decent attacking midfield/forward line-up on this occasion, and it was just more proof that we desperately need to get more younger players into the club who are fit and can run about for 90 minutes so that others can either 'retire gracefully' or have a long rest to sort out their injury problems.