

Sunday 13th November 2005

London F.A. Sunday Intermediate Cup Second Round Match at the Bricket Wood Sports Centre (near St. Albans)

NORTH WEST NEASDEN 'A'	4	EDMONTON ROVERS	3	(After Extra Time) HT 1-1 FT 2-2
Platt (38 mins.), Skone (Pen.) (72 mins.), Shindler (95 mins.), Cash (114 mins.)		Mc,Govern (2, 63 mins.), S.Dorward (94 mins.)		

NORTH WEST NEASDEN 'A's LINE-UP: David FOX; Daniel FOX, Adam LEVINE, Scott SHINDLER, Danny HODES; Sammy CARR, Nicky SKONE, Ben WULWICK, Greg CORIN; Johnny HAIK, Lee PLATT
Subs.: Max FIELDGRASS, Lee CASH, Dave MICHAELS (Not Used)

EDMONTON ROVERS LINE-UP (with Marks out of 10): Darryl JOHNSON (GK) (6); Flory ZINGA (6½), Andrew WARMERDAM (8), Paul WOOLSTON (8), Terry MOORE (6½); Derek DORWARD (6½), John Mc,LOUGHLIN (7), Paul ELLERKER (7), Stuart DORWARD (7); Conor Mc,GOVERN (7½), Steve COKELL (7) **Subs.:** Vernon 'Kizza' NXUMALO (7), Colin BESTER (Not Used), Daniel GEORGE (Not Used), Kris SPYROU (Not Used), James WALKER (Not Used)

Referee: Mike BARNES

Weather Conditions: Rain in First Half, then Sunny & Cold

Attendance: 19



Factual Report (by Laurence Hughes): After having the luck of the draw for the *First Round* of this competition (in which we beat A Small World 13-1), we certainly didn't get that for *this* round, as North West Neasden 'A' (i.e. their *First Team*) were top of the Premier Division table in their League and undefeated so far this season. However, as our ill-fated Reserve Team had only lost narrowly in Extra Time to their Reserve (i.e. 'B') Team in the London F.A. Sunday *Junior Cup* last season, we were under the impression going into this match that the Jewish (Maccabi) Sunday League in which they play was nowhere near the standard of the Mercury Waltham Sunday League, but on *this* evidence it is obviously not far off.

We actually fielded a very strong side for this match, even though we had five players missing who would have been in contention for a place in the starting line-up, these being Nick Vertigans (a definite starter, but tied up with family commitments), Robin Pryke (Ankle Injury), Tony Speller (Rib Injury), Peter Murphy (In New York for the weekend) and Brazilian Juneka Junior (who we were hoping to give a debut to in this match, but he failed to show up). Despite these absences though, we still had five substitutes available for this game, although all of them were teenagers and Manager Trevor Hughes was hoping to have a bit more experience on the bench...even though we had plenty in the starting line-up as usual with all of our midfield quartet aged over 30, along with goalkeeper Darryl Johnson, defenders Paul Woolston & Terry Moore and forward Conor Mc,Govern.

Amazingly for a London Cup match, everybody found the venue this time without any trouble and

arrived with plenty of time to spare, even though the first question I was asked on arriving at our meeting point at the Southbury Leisure Centre was 'Right, so how do we get to Neasden from here then ?!' 🤔

On turning up at the *correct* venue though (about 20 miles North of Neasden !), we were confronted by some luxurious surroundings, which according to my passenger, new signing Flory Zinga, were just like those at Lilleshall. He knew that because he had actually trained/played at the 'famous' old F.A. H.Q., having been on the books of West Ham and Southend United as a youngster and having played a couple of games for Cambridge United in the Football League last season !

With Flory at right-back then, and our two other recent signings Andrew Warmerdam and John Mc,Loughlin both also included for only their second appearances for the club and definitely strengthening the side, we were very confident going into this match despite two successive defeats. In fact when Conor Mc,Govern put us 1-0 up after only two minutes with a close-range volley from Steve Cokell's whipped-in corner, most of our players probably thought that here were another one of those teams we often encounter in London Cup competitions who are top of their League but 'crap' in comparison to us and that it would be another 'too easy' and 'boring' game. After all, their marking was non-existent for that goal, but they soon gave us a rude awakening more or less right from the re-start and indeed for the rest of the First Half thereafter with numerous lightning quick attacks which either involved players running at pace at our defenders from midfield or doing quick one-twos to get behind us, all at a speed which no other team we had played so far this season (or indeed ever !?) had managed. With constant heavy drizzle throughout the First Half making the ball really slippery, Darryl Johnson was having real problems in goal and rode his luck on two or three occasions, as did our new-look defence, who were still trying to learn each others' games (and Manager Trevor Hughes's tactics). In fact the playing surface wasn't much to our liking either, as despite North West Neasden claiming beforehand that they played on an 'excellent pitch which was like a bowling green', it was anything *but*, as it was soft and muddy with grass six inches long and nothing like the cut, rolled & forked surface we are used to at Hazelwood. Indeed our hosts had a real setback half-way through the First Half because of the pitch when midfielder Ben Wulwick had to be carried off with a dislocated and broken ankle after catching his studs in the 'turf' while sliding into a challenge on John Mc,Loughlin. (Can't believe the Bricket Wood Sports Centre didn't have a stretcher for the poor bloke !). The five-minute delay for that should have helped our players get their breath back, but although we had the occasional good chance ourselves, North West Neasden just brought on another speed merchant as a substitute and it was no surprise that they managed to



finally equalise in the 38th minute when forward Lee Platt scrambled the ball in from close-range after left-sided midfielder Greg Corin was allowed to cut the ball back from the by-line too easily after a scramble in the area.

We came off at Half-Time rather fortunate to be on level terms, but a few things were sorted out during the break for our new players and the Second Half was a much different affair with most of the clear-cut chances falling to *us* this time. That came from a combination of clever play by us and a dodgy offside trap from North West Neasden which allowed the Dorward brothers to go clean through on goal on three occasions, although only 'Del' actually managed to get a shot in (straight at keeper Fox), while Stuart was foiled by two excellent last-ditch

challenges. However, we managed to score an excellent goal to go 2-1 up in the 63rd minute when a quality move on the break involving Steve Cokell and sweeper Andrew Warmerdam saw Conor Mc,Govern finish superbly with a shot inside keeper Fox's near post, and we actually had a couple more chances shortly afterwards where we could have gone 3-1 up and maybe killed the game off, especially as our defence was looking a lot more solid than it had done earlier in the game with Paul Woolston and Andrew Warmerdam particularly outstanding.

Having said that, we certainly rode our luck with the offside trap, as Referee Barnes for some reason asked his Club Linesmen to flag for their *own* forwards instead of the opposition for this

match (as is normal), and then decided to ignore whatever they flagged for anyway and make his own mind up from nearly 30 yards away. We definitely got the better of his decisions in that respect, although that was probably because we were playing the offside trap virtually every time North West Neasden shaped up to play a through ball (because our defenders were all too 'knackered' to sprint...as usual !?). However, we didn't get a very favourable decision in the 72nd minute when Terry Moore was harshly adjudged to have handled in the area and Nicky Skone easily side-footed the resulting Penalty past Darryl Johnson to make it 2-2.

Surprisingly we didn't crumble after that (like we normally do when we come up against fitter, sharper sides who have been putting us under a lot of pressure), and when Vernon 'Kizza' Nxumalo was brought on in the 87th minute for the cramp-inflicted Derek Dorward, it actually gave us a lift, especially when the game went into Extra-Time. That saw Stuart Dorward put us back in front in the 94th minute with a brave far post header from Flory Zinga's excellent cross, but we were then forced into conceding a corner just a minute later which saw North West Neasden defender Scott Shindler come up to equalise again with a towering header at the far post in which he out-jumped Stuart...who then went down with cramp.

Our 'skipper' managed to continue though, with Manager Trevor Hughes reluctant to bring him off for an inexperienced youngster in case the game ended up going to penalties, but with another 25 minutes still to go, there wasn't much chance of that as North West Neasden were still looking the fitter side with their eventual winner in the 24th minute of Extra Time proof of that as our midfielders and defenders were outpaced on the break with substitute Lee Cash firing in a clinical finish to make it 4-3.

We did actually have one last chance after that to send the game into a Penalty Shoot-Out though when we were awarded a free-kick in a very advantageous position for it to be whipped into the area for the likes of Conor McGovern, Andrew Warmerdam and Darryl Johnson (yes, Darryl Johnson !) to get on the end of, all of them having a clear height advantage over a North West Neasden side who were virtually all small, nippy players. However, John McLoughlin's dead-ball kick sailed 20 feet over the bar as our players just stood there in stunned silence and it was a huge disappointment, especially as we can all imagine what the scenes would have been like had Darryl scored an equaliser there...and then been a hero in a Penalty shoot-out ?!

To be fair to McLoughlin though, that was just about his only mistake of the match, and indeed all of our players had made a really good effort and even though we lost, it was a thoroughly enjoyable game to watch.

For the past three seasons we have been knocked out of London Cup competitions by either the eventual winners or Runners-Up (Aris, St.Anselms & Dees), but for North West Neasden to get there and make it four in a row for us, they will have to sort out their offside trap, as anyone with a bit more pace than the Dorward brothers may well punish them in those one-on-one situations they 'gifted' us with. However, it's hard to see any other team having attacking players so fit, sharp, skilful and with the ability to run at such pace with the ball, and bearing that in mind, we did well to give them a relatively close game.

There is no 'Murf' Report for this match as he was away in New York for the weekend !
[CLICK HERE](#) to visit North West Neasden 'A's page on their League Website (for further information about them).