

Sunday 12th September 2004

London F.A. Sunday Junior Cup First Round Match at Albany Park (North West Neasden 'B's Home Match)

NORTH WEST NEASDEN 'B'	2	EDMONTON ROVERS RESERVES	0	(A.E.T.) HT 0-0 FT 0-0
? (100 Mins.), ? (120 Mins.)				

NORTH WEST NEASDEN 'B'S LINE-UP: No Team Details

EDMONTON ROVERS RESERVES' LINE-UP (with Marks out of 10): Dave BAGNALL (GK) (7); Tony SPELLER (7), Ritchie COPUES (7), Gary ADAMSON (7½), Terry DELLER (6½); Colin BESTER (6), Peter MURPHY (6½), Tem ADIL (6½), Foysol AHMED (6); Leon Mc,KENZIE-Mc,KAY (7), Daniel DALEY (6½)
Subs.: Gary ODELL (6), Scott ROBERTSON (6), Brian KAMUTEKU (6)

Referee: Ronald Mangwendeza

Weather Conditions: Strong Blustery Wind

Attendance: 30 ?

Report (By Peter Murphy)...Edited by Laurence Hughes !: After a summer of internet squabbling over subs and potential new kit sponsors, it was time for Edmonton Rovers stiff to get back to what they do best – disfiguring the beautiful game. And disfigure it they did. The conditions were set fair: Albany Park's windy micro-climate didn't let us down and it's semi-lunar surface was ripe for some first class bobbles. All that was needed was some opposition and a ref. But where was Mr. Mangwendeza when we needed him? According to some post-10.30 texting he was in the vicinity but David McCullum would have been an easier figure to pick out. Eventually, across the Albany plains a figure came into view, kit bag in hand. The mysterious stranger proceeded to change pitch-side and the pristine black kit he donned revealed that we were now ready to kick-off season 2004-05.

Unlike a recent pre-season friendly where Rovers couldn't raise a 5-a-side team, today they fielded a full complement complete with 3 subs led by skipper Tony Speller. Our leader stepped forward for the toss and, having called correctly, decided to kick against the Albany mistral. With a wimpish peep on his whistle Mr. Mangwendeza got us under way. Now, before we go any further, this whistle deserves a mention. It had the qualities of a dog whistle whose voice was yet to break – it's high pitch was audible but only just. Surely it was second hand? Did he get it from a car boot? Was that why he was late? No matter, it soon turned out to be entirely apt for it seemed to suit the official's unclear decision making to a tee. It wasn't a case of good or bad, agree or disagree, but purely "go on then, I give up". (*The London F.A. often appoint new, untried, inexperienced referees from other Leagues in their Sunday Junior Cup competition - Ed.*) The first half was tight and hard fought. Rovers battled away well, particularly in defence where the back four plus Dave Bagnall – his generous decision to volunteer for goalkeeping duties in the absence of a specialist surely an early marker for clubman of the year - restricted North West Neasden to just one clear cut chance. Presented with a grounded 'keeper, the ball at his feet and a net at his mercy an unnamed (he'll thank me for that) North West Neasden striker somehow contrived to slice the ball like Seve on a bad day. Indeed, such was his contact that the ball neither moved forward nor back, spinning violently about it's axis and allowing Rovers to clear. At half-time Rovers turned round level at 0-0. For a side brim full of new faces to keep a clean sheet against the wind was no mean feat and augured well for the second half. After some much needed H2O and energising bon mots from Messrs Howley and Beeden, Rovers re-took the field in confident mood. And it was not misplaced as chance after chance was created, primarily by the dogged determination of forwards Daley and McKenzie-McKay. But try as they might, today this pairs' boots were loaded with blanks. When the bobbles didn't get them, a slight lack of confidence did. But on another day match balls would have been up for grabs.

So just as Neasden failed to make the wind count, so did Rovers. At the full-time whistle players on both sides were ready to call it a day but Russell Beeden threw a spanner in those works. Across the pitch he came like David Pleat circa 1983 to remind the ref of his responsibilities. "Extra time and penalties" the official was officially reminded.

By this time Manager Howley had deployed his three substitutes. Scott Robertson had added some presence to midfield, Gary Odell had replaced Colin Bester on the right and Brian Kamuteku

had reformed his central midfield partnership with Jurassic Murf.

Of the three Kamuteku made the greatest impact. Aesthetically. His summer had obviously included a trip to David Beckham's jeweller so Rovers could now boast the sparkliest pair of lugholes on the pitch.

The first period of extra time brought the first goal. The wind assisted Neasden in the winning of a corner for which the zonal system was deployed. Largely this had proved effective throughout the match but, on this occasion, it proved Rovers undoing.

The problem arose when Neasden moved the ball out to the angle of the penalty area instead of throwing it in first time. This altered the shape of the play and some Rovers defenders began to discard the system as they covered attacking runs while others held firm. The result was neither one thing nor the other and allowed Neasden to exploit. Their substitute drifted out wide behind Murf who was defending the back post zone. When the ball came over Neasden's No.12 arced a run so that he arrived on the edge of the area. It was a case of right place, right time as the part-cleared ball landed in his stride and he sent a decent left foot shot which grazed Murf's despairing studs and gave Bagnall no chance.

From there it was always going to be tough and Neasden's understandable but ultimately frustrating time wasting tactics didn't sweeten the taste of what became defeat. The worst culprit was Neasden's Worsel Gummidge-like right-back who, not content with putting the ball out from 12 inches a la Peter Kay, thought it ever so amusing to kick the ball away when Rovers gained a last minute corner. To rub salt in that particular wound Neasden went up the other end and scored with what was the last kick of the match. [Click here to find out more about North West Neasden 'B' from the Maccabi Sunday League Website.](#)