

Sunday 25th September 2005

Mercury Waltham Sunday League Roy Bailey Challenge Cup First Round Match at Hazelwood Sports Ground

|                 |   |                                                 |   |        |
|-----------------|---|-------------------------------------------------|---|--------|
| EDMONTON ROVERS | 0 | ROSEMILL                                        | 2 | HT 0-0 |
|                 |   | Aves (47 mins.),<br>Pryke (Own Goal) (81 mins.) |   |        |

**EDMONTON ROVERS LINE-UP (with Marks out of 10):** Darryl JOHNSON (GK) (6); Gary COKELL (7), Stuart DORWARD (7), Robin PRYKE (7), Terry MOORE (7); Foysol AHMED (6½), Derek DORWARD (6½), Tony SPELLER (7), Vernon 'Kizza' NXUMALO (6½), Peter MURPHY (6½); Steve COKELL (6½) **Subs.:** Daniel GEORGE (6), Ritchie COPUES (Not Used), Colin BESTER (Not Used), Scott ROBERTSON (Not Used)

**ROSEMILL's LINE-UP:** Tony LAWRENCE (GK); Ian BUTLER, Kevin GILBERT, Ray RICCOBENA; Ben LUHMAN, Darren HOSKINS, Mark BROOKS, Ross DONNETT, Steve PYE; Steve MILLER, Robin AVES **Subs.:** Matthew WALLER, Nathan RYAN, Wayne BURNETT

**Referee:** Peter JONES

**Weather Conditions:** Sunny with blustery wind

**Attendance:** 20



**Factual Report (by Laurence Hughes):**

The Mercury Waltham League's Roy Bailey Challenge Cup is their most prestigious competition as it is for all First Teams in the League and quite a hard one to win. However, two seasons ago we managed to reach the Semi-Finals where we were the 'favourites' but lost 3-1 to Rosemill, only because we were forced to field just a bare eleven (including several 'bit-part' players) due to our Reserve Team (that we were running at the time) reaching the League Reserve Cup Final and their players being Cup-Tied and unable to help the First Team out.

When we found out the draw for this Competition had paired us with Rosemill

in the *First* Round this time then, there were several things in our favour that should have seen us gain revenge, namely the demise of our Reserve Team (leaving us with four substitutes for this match), Rosemill finishing bottom of Division Two last season and now being in Division Three (two Divisions below us), and our 13-1 win the previous week, which had given us a lot of confidence.

Even though we were missing Paul Ellerker, who was attending a wedding somewhere, and Paul Woolston & Conor McGovern...who were both preferring to play in a Work football Tournament in Barcelona instead (and who can blame them !?), the return of Stuart and Derek Dorward offset those absences, while Robin Pryke was now fit enough to come in and start the match in preference to Colin Bester, who had been celebrating his 18th Birthday the night before and not surprisingly ended up as only an unused substitute.

Rosemill though, were fired up for this match as well, as despite their Reserve Team also having a match on this date, they still turned up with three substitutes and plenty of supporters on the touchline. In fact they even turned up with a spare kit of yellow shirts, which was just as well, as Referee Peter Jones appeared to be colour-blind and asked them to change from their usual sky blue tops just before the kick-off because he thought they were the same colour as our jade shirts...the first time this has happened in 13 previous meetings with them !

As we had had such an easy match the previous week though, there was always a danger that we would struggle to re-adjust playing against a properly-organised and competitive team, and although we *tried* to pass the ball around again on what was another quality playing surface at Hazelwood, Rosemill's extra fitness and competitiveness made that quite hard and we couldn't

quite get the final pass right on a number of occasions during a goal-less First Half. Not that we played badly, and indeed Steve Cokell was unlucky in the 9th minute with a shot which cannoned off the crossbar, although Derek Dorward really should have scored towards Half-Time when he found himself clean through but dragged his shot well wide.

Rosemill's only real clear-cut chance of the half came in the 8th minute when Terry Moore was forced to head off the line from forward Steve Miller, but on the balance of play we should have come off at the break one or two goals ahead and we looked on it as only being a matter of time before we would score and then go on to win fairly comfortably.

It was good to see a large number of our supporters turning up as the First Half progressed though...this being a bonus of the Reserve Team having to fold up. Unfortunately though, one of them was a certain Lee Osborn, fresh from his three defeats out of three for his new club F.C. Vasco and obviously bringing that sort of 'bad luck' with him by coming to watch *this* game ! (F.C. Vasco's match had been called off because of no referee being available). When Rosemill forward Robin Aves threw a bit of a wobbly because of some poor refereeing decisions going against him just before Half-Time though...and attempted to take out his frustration with a wild two-footed lunge at the completely innocent Robin Pryke, Osborn forgot he was no longer an Edmonton Rovers player and produced one of his typical verbal onslaughts from the touchline aimed at various Rosemill defenders which undoubtedly would have led to them docking off a couple of marks out of 10 on their Result Card for our sportsmanship in this match...when all our *players*

were behaving themselves and quite rightly letting the Referee deal with it !

Aves escaped with only a yellow card, which we accepted at the time, but not when he put Rosemill 1-0 up just two minutes after the break with a header into an empty net after a lucky rebound off Darryl Johnson went his way from his initial poor first attempt at a shot (albeit after we had been badly caught out by a long punt out of defence). Darryl had not had much to do before that though, as our back four had actually played well and looked very solid as a unit.



and Vernon 'Kizza' Nxumalo were not as effective been the previous week because Rosemill played themselves, all of whom were physically strong. However, once we moved Stuart Dorward up from way through the half, that all changed and we numerous chances but just couldn't finish them, had no luck at all on occasions, especially in the 67th minute when both the Dorward brothers hit the bar in a mad scramble inside the six-yard box. To their credit though, Rosemill defended 'heroically' with players throwing themselves in front of goalbound shots and their keeper Tony Lawrence making some excellent saves, and as so often happens in games like that, they then went and scored a second on the break in the 81st minute when substitute Nathan Ryan (who also appeared to be known as 'Kieron Dyer' !?) was allowed to cross the ball too easily (after nutmegging Gary Cokell !) and it glanced off Robin Pryke's head and into the far corner to leave Darryl Johnson helpless.

Although we were now 2-0 down though, we didn't give up and were determined to score two quick goals and force the game into Extra-Time...not that I particularly wanted that when I was desperately trying not to vomit and wanting the game to stop right then in case I keeled over onto the pitch from the wobbly trestle table that is now my makeshift television gantry at Hazelwood ! (This was all due to a continuing wisdom tooth problem and nothing to do with Colin Bester's party the night before...or our performance in this match).

It was one of those days where we were probably *never* going to score though (because we used up all our goals for the month the previous week) and this time we really *did* need somebody to be a bit more greedy as too many of our players were not prepared to get a shot in early from the edge of the area. Having said that, we still created 10 clear-cut chances in the match compared to their four or five and Rosemill Manager Brian Hoskins (a former work colleague of Tony

In fact it was in midfield where we had a bit of a problem as Foyso Ahmed as they had five in midfield players. sweeper half-started creating although we



Speller's) admitted afterwards that they had ridden their luck and that we were the better side.

Apart from having to explain this 'shock' defeat to curious League officials in conversations with them later in the afternoon, the most annoying aspect of yet another First Round exit in a Cup Competition is that it now results in us having a few weeks without a fixture later on in the season, and with us no longer having a Reserve Team, that will be very frustrating for players who are not getting a game, while it also reduces our income from players' match subs...unless we can find a pitch and a referee somewhere to play Friendly matches whenever necessary.

And next week ?....we have no game arranged !

**'Murf's Alternative Report !!:** They'll be plastering posters all over North London. Wanted For Daylight Robbery: 11 Yellow Shirted Bandits, Going Under The Collective "Rosemill", In Possession Of A Second Round Place in the interminably named Mercury Waltham Sunday League Roy Bailey Challenge Cup. But though it was a smash and grab raid of which Billy The Kid would have been proud, Rovers really only had themselves to blame.

The team news saw the unavailable Woolston & Ellerker replaced by the post-nuptial Dorwards and young Bester, suffering from the after affects of turning 18 the night before, joining his Mum on the bench. His replacement was Robin Pryke.

As kick-off approached, it was heart warming to note that some traditions live on in football. In the era of the Hoxton crop and Beckham mohican, I can proudly report the sweep over is alive and well and refereeing in North London. And while many would see this as paying homage to the great Bobby Charlton, referee Jones had more than a touch of Ralph Coates about him. The early stages saw Rovers laid back and lackadaisical in possession. Perhaps it was a touch of complacency carried over from last week's thrashing of A Small World but Rovers were soon woken up when Terry Moore had to make a goal saving header off the line on eight minutes. This brought an immediate response through Steve Cokell whose well struck 20 yarder cannoned off the bar. It would prove not to be the only time the woodwork kept out Rovers and, by full time, they would be cursing a touch of the Man. City's.

As the pattern of the game settled Rovers began to carve out one or two chances, the best of which fell to Derek Dorward who dragged his shot wide. As for Rosemill, it was proving to be a good day for the swear box and, in their number 10, they possessed a Wayne Rooney impersonator of the highest order. He had the "why is everyone against me" facial expression down to a 'T' and this was coupled with a fine four letter vocabulary and propensity to boot the ball away every time the decision went against him. All that was missing was the ironic clap. On another day Rosemill's "Rooney" could have picked up more cards than Clintons but, today, referee Jones seemed strangely lenient. This was even more puzzling since the last time your scribe had been refereed by him he certainly took no sh\*t, a position evidenced by his pre-match right hand deployment of a Safeways bag to clear the discarded remnants of a dog's dinner. Eventually, however, even Jones's limit was reached when "Rooney" crunched Robin Pryke from behind to earn a well overdue yellow.

The half-time parity brought encouragement from Manager Hughes for Rovers to keep their shape and faith in football. With the slight breeze now behind, Rovers began positively and a neat build-up saw Tony Speller's defence splitter simply begging Derek Dorward to put the ball in the back of the net. But he declined.

Rovers' next foray saw a Steve Cokell cross charged down and, with many of the home side committed forward, the chance fell to Rosemill to break. A long punt forward found our mate "Rooney" in behind and Darryl Johnson raced to the edge of his area to meet him. The former's initial shot cannoned off Johnson and, with a massed Rosemill chorus of "handball" still emanating from their cherubic throats, "Rooney" headed the rebounding ball over Johnson and into the net. The insult was made even more injurious when Rosemill bagged a late second. The goal was set up by Rosemill's diminutive substitute right winger, a Kieron Dyer lookalike who, unlike his doppelganger, set off on a purposeful left wing run which progressed into the Rovers' box. At its end he sent in a weak right foot cross from a tight angle which brushed the back of Robin Pryke's head before caressing its way into the far corner.

It was soft but they all count and how Rovers could have done with one of those. Instead they were left to rue a host of near misses, poor final balls and a bout of Dorward pinball as first Derek's overhead kick hit the bar and then Stuart's following up header struck the self same spot.

So Rovers left the pitch concerned as to the contents of the valuables bag, so well and truly had their pockets been picked. As with their first two league games their football, though not as

fluent, deserved greater reward. But the problem remains finishing, both of moves carved out and teams put to the sword.