

Sunday 4th April 2004

Mercury Waltham Sunday League (Roy Bailey Challenge Cup Semi-Final) Match at Grundy Park, Cheshunt

ROSEMILL	3	EDMONTON ROVERS	1	HT 1-0
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Mitchell (45 mins.),
Gilbert (49 mins),
Riccobena (71 mins.)

McGovern (50 mins.)

Rosemill's Line-Up: Jason WAINWRIGHT (GK); Darren HOSKINS, Ilija BAROS, Kevin GILBERT, Ray RICCOBENA; Steve MILLAR, Mark BROOKS, Dean TREDGETT, Darren MITCHELL; Tim VENABLES, Scott WRIGHT **Subs.:** Ben LUHMAN, Nick WILTON, Angelo SANNITI

Edmonton Rovers Line-Up (with Marks out of 10): Darryl JOHNSON (GK) (6½); Chidi IBEKWEM (6½), Stuart DORWARD (7), Paul WOOLSTON (6½), Tony SPELLER (7); Gary COKELL (6½), Paul ELLERKER (6½), Eric IBEKWEM (6½), Peter SUTTON (7½); Derek DORWARD (6½), Conor McGOVERN (7) **Subs. Used:** None

Referee: Ian ANDREWS

Assistant Referees: Leo DeVILBISS & Phil GISSING

Weather Conditions: Sunny & Dry

Attendance: 46

Report: During the week before this match, we had been panicking somewhat that we may not have been able to field eleven men due to injuries, holidays, family commitments and Reserve Team regulars not being able to play because it would cup-tie them for the League Reserve Cup Final, but in the end, despite Marco Ellerker, Gary Odell and Chris 'Nugget' Beeden all pulling out at short notice, we still managed to field a reasonably good starting line-up of eleven First Team squad members even though we only had one substitute available in Reserve Team defender Gary Adamson (who was surplus to requirements for their Cup Final).

With Tony Speller, Peter Sutton & Derek Dorward all coming in for the unavailable Scott Robertson, Steve Cokell & Marco Ellerker then, it meant we were fielding a side of very similar ability to that which produced such an excellent performance to beat Enfield Rangers Old Boys in the Quarter-Final the week before. That saw us start the match really confidently and there certainly looked to be a big gulf in quality straight away between the Premier Division and Division



Two (in which Rosemill were languishing just below mid-table). However, although we dominated possession and pinned Rosemill back inside their own half for most of the first 45 minutes, we just couldn't get a decent shot on target, despite creating numerous openings with some good fast control and passing. Of course we were then punished for that right on the Half-Time whistle when Rosemill took the lead from what seemed like their first shot at goal as Darren Mitchell scrambled the ball in on the goal-line after a long throw-in had bobbled about in the 6-yard box without being cleared properly. However, it was fairly obvious to everyone except Referee Andrews and Linesman Gissing that it should never have been a throw in the first place, but a free-kick to us for a foul on Tony Speller, so we were clearly unlucky there that neither official saw the incident.

It was our usual story of conceding a goal to go behind just before the break when we had been well in control though and because of that, maybe it wasn't a surprise that we found ourselves 2-0 down just four minutes into the Second Half

when our zonal marking from a corner failed for just about the first time this season to allow Rosemill skipper Kevin Gilbert a free header which he powered in at the near post...this apparently being skipper Stuart Dorward's fault for telling Gary Cokell to stand in the wrong position at the front of the 6-yard box !?

Thankfully though, our heads didn't go down after that and when Conor McGovern managed to scramble a goal-back from close range just a minute later after Derek Dorward's shot had been well saved, we really started piling on the pressure despite kicking uphill and against the wind, this showing an improved level of fitness...at last ! That saw Peter Sutton in particular terrorise the Rosemill defence in a valiant effort to give us some reward before he moves back up North later this month...one brilliant run down the touchline in the First Half even earning applause from Rosemill's numerous supporters !...and with virtually everyone taking pot-shots at the Rosemill goal it seemed inevitable that we would equalise, particularly after one mad scramble half-way through the Second Half which saw a combination of Rosemill players somehow keep out five fiercely-struck shots at goal in the space of about 10 seconds !

Meanwhile, defensively we had looked very solid in open play, but when Rosemill made it 3-1 from only their third decent effort of the game in the 71st minute, it was once again a set-piece from which we were badly caught out...this time a long throw-in being headed into the net via the inside of the far post almost in slow-motion by defender Ray Riccobena when if we had been defending zonally 'as a corner' with a man on that post it would have been cleared easily. Of course we can't hear what's going on at those situations from over on the touchline, but apparently Paul Woolston doesn't agree with zonal marking from long throw-ins for some reason and tells players to mark man-for-man, this obviously being something that

needs sorting out, but then Manager Trevor Hughes had been on holiday the previous two weeks and had overlooked it despite several instances of it happening in previous matches this season !?

The damage had therefore been done in our most important match of the season so far, but from what had gone on before that, it was obvious that we were still capable of scoring a couple of goals in the last 20 minutes to at least take the game into Extra-Time, so Stuart Dorward was therefore pushed forward into midfield with Gary Cokell switching to left-back and Tony Speller to sweeper, but although we still created chances, we really could have done with having the likes of Lexton Harrison and Leon Mc,Kenzie-Mc,Kay as substitutes to bring on and put the Rosemill defence under even more pressure, but that would have left us in danger of being unable to field a side in the League Reserve Cup Final because of the mass unavailability of players throughout the club at the present time. Instead we just had defender Gary Adamson 'on the bench', who had to be saved for injuries or cramp in Extra Time, and when most of our impressive number of supporters (including several wives & girlfriends for a change !?) started drifting away well before the end everything started to fizzle out and Rosemill cleverly ran down the clock by making three separate substitutions to tighten up defensively, while also having a couple of clear-cut chances on the break which could easily have seen them record a 5-1 victory if it hadn't been for some timely interventions from Tony Speller.

We therefore ended up suffering a shock defeat to clearly inferior opposition who were nowhere near as good as Enfield Rangers Old Boys the previous week or indeed most other teams in the Premier Division, and it took some explaining to curious League Officials and other Club Secretaries afterwards !

Although Paul Woolston came out with his usual post-match defeat statement of 'they wanted it more than us', not everyone agreed and in fact we probably played as well as in any other match this season but just had no luck in front of goal and made errors of concentration at the back for Rosemill's second and third goals which were duly punished. Indeed on another day we could easily have won this match 5-0 on the balance of play.

Yet again then, our First Team have failed to reach a Cup Final (or win anything at all !) and although skipper Stuart Dorward said down the Pub afterwards that he felt sorry for Laurence & Trevor Hughes, at least we have been involved in Cup Finals for the club before...even if the last one was nearly 20 years ago !