

Sunday 26th October 2003

Mercury Waltham Sunday League (Premier Division) Match at Hazelwood Sports Ground

EDMONTON ROVERS	3	SPORTING CLUB TOTTENHAM	0	HT 3-0
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D.Dorward (14 mins.),
P.Ellerker (23 mins.),
L.Harrison (34 mins)

Edmonton Rovers Line-Up (with Marks out of 10): Simon JACKSON (GK) (7); Robin PRYKE (7½), Stuart DORWARD (7½), Paul WOOLSTON (7½), John BEASLEY (8); Derek DORWARD (7½), Paul ELLERKER (7½), Steve BEASLEY (7½), Eric IBEKWEM (7½); Lexton HARRISON (7), Conor McGOVERN (7) **Subs.:** Tony SPELLER (6½), Leon McKENZIE-McKAY (7), Matt STEELL (6)

Sporting Club Tottenham's Line-Up: Paul MITCHELL (GK); Andrew WILLIAMS, Richard DILL, Jean-Luc DaSILVA, Mason RANDERWALLA; Yiltan KEMAL, Chris McNEILL, Alex BENJAMIN, Anthony FEEHAN; Jermaine SMITH, Tyrone JONES **Sub.:** John DILL

Referee: Alan HAGGART

Weather Conditions: Sunny, but Cold

Attendance: 13



Report: Having lost 4-1 to Sporting in our *last* encounter with them, we were a bit worried coming into this match as they had started the season really well having only lost once so far, while we were still awaiting our first win and were missing the likes of Marco Ellerker (Family Commitments), Steve Cokell (On Holiday) and the injured Peter Sutton & Chris 'Nugget' Beeden (amongst others). Sporting though, turned up with the strongest side they had put out all season thanks to a few new signings and, as usual, were out on the pitch half-an-hour before the kick-off to do their pre-match warm-up routine while our players were busy lounging about outside the changing rooms having their usual pre-match fag...or in Lexton Harrison's case maybe something a bit stronger than that, which was presumably why he strolled onto the pitch five

minutes after the kick-off leaving us to start the match with only 10 men again for the second week running ! However, Manager Trevor Hughes's decision to play an Arsenal-style 4-4-2 formation in this match with Paul Ellerker and Steve Beasley deployed in the 'Vieira & Gilberto Silva roles' paid off more or less right from the start as we took the lead after just 14 minutes when Sporting's best defender Jean-Luc DaSilva was booked for hacking down his former team-mate Eric Ibekwem and Derek Dorward headed in John Beasley's resulting free-kick at the near post ('Denis Law-style according to his brother Stuart !) to put us 1-0 up (See Picture Right). With 'Junior' being prepared to help us out in this game despite his intended retirement and Paul Woolston returning from injury, we were fielding a really strong side defensively and Sporting's attempts at grabbing a quick equaliser were fairly comfortably dealt with. That allowed Paul Ellerker to get forward from time to time and he managed to put us 2-0 up in the 23rd minute with a good finish from the rebound after Sporting keeper Paul Mitchell had allowed John Beasley's deflected through ball to bounce off his knees straight back into Ellerker's path.



Sporting then lost midfielder Yiltan Kemal through injury in the 31st minute but we were well in control by then anyway with the pitch and the weather conditions being perfect for our passing game...in stark contrast to the two occasions when we played Sporting *last* season. That saw Lexton Harrison put us 3-0 up in the 34th minute when he outpaced the Sporting defence from John Beasley's accurate 'long ball with backspin' to scuff ? a low shot across keeper Mitchell and into the far bottom corner from 12 yards.

Being 3-0 up at Half-Time was probably beyond our wildest dreams, but not surprisingly Sporting came out for the Second Half a bit more fired-up and looking for an early goal to make a game of it. That meant Simon Jackson had to make one or two good saves as we were put under a lot of pressure. However, for every shot Sporting had in the Second Half, we must have had three times as many ourselves as we repeatedly caught them on the break with Lexton Harrison having a field day in terms of the number of situations he found himself in with only keeper Mitchell to beat. Unfortunately though, he wasted all of them either by shooting high or wide, producing a poor first touch, and most of all firing straight at Mitchell with shots that were far too predictable and easy to save. However, Lexton wasn't the only culprit, as Stuart Dorward missed a

penalty in the 55th minute by shooting against the foot of the post, although substitute Leon McKenzie-McKay was unlucky with a cross-shot that hit the foot of keeper Mitchell's *other* post while Eric Ibekwem was also unfortunate not to score late on with a far post volley which Mitchell superbly tipped onto the crossbar.

Really though, we should have increased our lead after Sporting were reduced to 10 men in the 80th minute as Jean-Luc DaSilva was sent off for a second bookable offence after deliberately attempting to bring down John Beasley who had gone charging down the left wing again looking to get another cross in.

However, we never looked like throwing away our lead and having three good substitutes to bring on late in the Second Half made a big difference this time with Steve Beasley, Conor McGovern & Paul Woolston all able to come off and have a breather to protect various injuries.

This was clearly our best performance of the season so far though and obviously a lot more enjoyable than the 'boring' 4-5-1 system we have been having to play over the last year or so because of the defensive inadequacies of certain players.

Whether that makes man-of-the-match John Beasley change his mind about retiring or Manager Trevor Hughes stick to this system from now on remains to be seen though. Clearly tactics *can* play a part at this level as Sporting's defenders were definitely caught out in this match by having two players challenging them all the time rather than one, thereby not allowing them to play the long balls over our defence from the back which gave us so many problems last season.