

Sunday 16th September 2007

Mercury Waltham Sunday League Roy Bailey Challenge Cup First Round Match at Hazelwood Sports Ground (*St. Mary's Home Game*)

ST. MARY'S (EDMONTON)	3	EDMONTON ROVERS	5	(A.E.T.)
Moore (30 mins.), Benjamin (54 mins.), Bowen (57 mins.)		S.Cokell (75 mins.), Vertigans (80 mins.), D.Dorward (82, 100 mins.), Hagan (104 mins.)		HT 1-0 FT 3-3

ST. MARY'S' LINE-UP: Andy QUINN (GK); James O'SULLIVAN, Jean-Luc DaSILVA, Shay SALIH, Martin DALTON; Michael MOORE, Alex BENJAMIN, Daniel SHIELS, Liam JENNINGS; Sam BOWEN, Jamie O'DONOGHUE **Subs.:** Steven NICOLE, Bradley JENNINGS, Alan SHEA

EDMONTON ROVERS LINE-UP (with Marks out of 10): Ozel OZERMAN (GK) (7); Stuart DORWARD (8), Alan BARNARD (8), Martin LOVEDAY (7½), Terry MOORE (7½); Tem ADIL (7), Danny HAGAN (8), Clark WILLIAMS (7½), Steve COKELL (7½); Conor McGOVERN (8½), Tony KING (7) **Subs.:** Nick VERTIGANS (*On for Adil 63 mins*) (7½), Derek DORWARD (*On for King 63 mins.*) (8), Stuart BYHURST (*On for Williams 75 mins.*) (7½)

Referee: Russell HOWES

Weather Conditions: Sunny & Windy

Attendance: 33

Factual Report (by Laurence Hughes):

Having faced Division Five side The Accies in the First Round of this competition the previous season (for a relatively 'easy' game), we were a bit disappointed to be drawn again fellow Division One side and Hazelwood Sports Ground pitch-sharers St. Mary's in the First Round this season, even though it was an Edmonton



derby (albeit played in Palmers Green because we can't get a pitch in Edmonton) and our first meeting with them for six years.

Indeed despite beating them 4-0 in that Division One match back in December 2001, we did not have a good record against St. Mary's over the years, and with at least seven players missing who would have been in contention for a place in the starting line-up for this match, we knew we would have to produce an extra special performance to progress through to the next round. That was particularly so bearing in mind St. Mary's recent record, as they had only lost once in their previous 10 matches, and having gained promotion to Division One for this season on the back of that run of form, they then beat St. Margaretsbury 3-2 in their only match so far, which was an impressive result bearing in mind St. Margaretsbury had beaten us 4-0 at Hazelwood

towards the end of last season.

However, they were missing a few key players themselves, especially ex-Enfield forward James Faulkner, who once scored a hat-trick against us for Brimsdown Rovers and definitely would have been a handful for our defence had he been playing. We also had a boost with the return of skipper Stuart Dorward, who had missed the Summer 7-a-side League, the whole of Pre-Season and our first League match against Cheshunt (Sunday) the previous week due to work and family commitments, and he nearly gave us the lead in the opening seconds of this game with a good run down the right (from full-back) to get a near-post shot in which St. Mary's keeper Andy Quinn did well to block.

Unfortunately though, that turned out to be our best effort of the First Half as we were forced to defend against a near gale-force wind which certainly wasn't in the weather forecast, and it was a good job we had some spare Rovers drill tops lying about on the touchline for various WAG's in the 33-strong crowd to wear.

With the diminutive figure of 18-year-old Ozel Ozerman in goal in the absence of the holidaying Simon Jackson, there was always the worry that he would let in a 'silly one' over his head, and after getting away with one or two fumbles from high balls early on, he was obviously at fault when St. Mary's took the lead in the 30th minute as Michael Moore's wind-assisted sliced free-kick sailed into the net, but certainly not out of reach for our other goalkeepers had they been playing. We then feared the worst after that, but to his credit Oz didn't let that mistake worry him and he made a number of excellent saves thereafter, especially just before Half-Time as the wind strengthened even more.

As it turned out, we actually defended really well to come off only 1-0 down, and with us kicking towards our favourite cow-shed end in the Second Half with the wind behind us, we were reasonably confident of scoring at least a couple. However, as soon as Referee Russell Howes blew his whistle to start the Second Half, the wind almost died down completely, but that actually suited our passing game and we produced an excellent move just after the break when Stuart Dorward got down the right to send over a perfect low cross for Conor McGovern to side-foot in from close range. Unfortunately though, the goal was ruled out by a St. Mary's club linesman's flag, which had almost certainly been raised against somebody else standing in an offside position who was 'not interfering'. McGovern of course went 'ballistic', but it was yet another example of a Referee telling club linesmen to flag 'for anyone in an offside position and then I will decide', and then forgetting he said that and blowing his whistle as soon as he saw the flag, but refusing to change his mind. As it happened, that was just about Mr. Howes' only 'mistake' of the match, and he was apparently right to 'disallow' another McGovern 'goal' just 5 minutes later when a St. Mary's defender somehow managed to clear his shot off the line.

Having started the Second Half so well though, we were then really kicked in the teeth just three minutes later when Alex Benjamin, who was one of a number of ex-Sporting Club Tropic players in the St. Mary's line-up, put them 2-0 up with an attempted header from a right-wing cross which actually came off the top of his shoulder to deceive Ozel Ozerman, but it was a bad

mistake by Steve Cokell in the first place when he gave the ball away straight to a St. Mary's player which allowed the cross to come in with our defenders all out of position. Unfortunately it was

another costly error that saw St. Mary's go 3-0 up in the 57th minute (just three minutes later) as Terry Moore gave away a rather needless free-kick on the edge of the area which was then tipped onto the post by Oz, but rebounded back along the goal-line to present Sam Bowen with an easy tap-in on his St. Mary's debut.

That saw our players immediately become very frustrated, Steve Cokell in particular, who seemed to think that Manager Trevor Hughes was psychic and should have known that St. Mary's would score two quick goals in the space of three minutes and therefore have substitutes Nick Vertigans and Derek Dorward ready to come on within seconds of that happening...which was impossible with Vertigans over the other side of the pitch running the line and Dorward probably just having lit up a fag. They eventually came on six minutes later though for Tem Adil and Tony King, who had both played reasonably well, but it was the extra experience at this level of Vertigans and Dorward that was to be a real telling factor.



It wasn't until the 75th minute that we finally managed a breakthrough though, as Steve Cokell beat the offside trap to make it 3-1 with a good finish, and then with Stuart Byhurst coming on for his debut to

replace Clark Williams, that gave us some fresh legs in midfield whereas a number of St. Mary's players seemed to be going down with injuries or cramp by that stage, probably as a result of the intensive pre-match warm-up they undertook before the game, something which we never do of course.

We then managed to pull another goal back in the 80th minute when Nick Vertigans found himself clean through after getting the luck of a fortunate bounce from an attempted defensive clearance, and then St. Mary's really went to pieces. Derek Dorward equalised just two minutes later with a tap-in after another good run and cross by his brother Stuart, then in the final few minutes of normal (and injury) time, Conor McGovern blazed a shot against the bar from 6 yards when it was easier to score, Derek Dorward sidefooted wide in a on-on-one with keeper Quinn, and then with the last kick of the Second Half, Nick Vertigans was given the chance to score a winner from the penalty spot after Danny Hagan had been brought down, but keeper Quinn made an excellent save diving to his right to send the game into Extra-Time.

That wasn't a problem for us though, as our players all seemed fairly fit whereas half of St. Mary's players were dead on their feet, and although they did force Ozel Ozerman into a couple of decent saves in Extra-Time, we were clearly the better side in the extra 30 minutes and deservedly went 4-3 ahead after 100 minutes when Derek Dorward celebrated his 300th match for the club (including Reserve Team appearances) by scoring a 'wonder goal' into the top corner on the volley which brought back memories of the goal he scored on his debut 'about 20 years ago !?' which features in our [Goal Of The Decade](#)...this one almost certainly being a candidate for Goal Of The Season.

We then killed the game off with a fifth goal just four minutes later when Danny Hagan and St. Mary's defender Alan Shea both forced the ball over the line in a 50/50 challenge after one of several brilliant runs from Conor McGovern had yet again carved apart the St. Mary's defence, the goal now been awarded to Hagan after watching video evidence. In fact despite now being 36, in this match McGovern played like he did when he first joined us way back in the early 90's

as a 19-year-old in terms of getting himself into wide positions and taking on defenders, and it was as if he had suddenly forgotten all about Hoddesdon Town and St. Margaretsbury's misguided attempts to turn him into a target-man centre-forward challenging for 50-50's hoofed out of defence while he was playing in Senior Saturday football for them in his mid-late 20's. Indeed several of our players commented after this match that they had never seen him play so well, but there were also some other excellent performances, particularly from Stuart Dorward in his first game of the season, 19-year-old Danny Hagan in the centre of midfield, Alan Barnard and new signing Martin Loveday, who looked really solid as a central defensive pairing and were not at fault for any of the goals, and obviously the three substitutes, who all made a difference when they came on.

In fact nobody played badly at all, and it was an even better comeback than the previous week as it was against good opponents who are not used to losing, so on that basis, this could even gain an entry in our [Best-Ever Performances](#) list !?

TREVOR HUGHES'S MANAGER'S REPORT

I returned from Cyprus having missed our thrilling 5-4 comeback victory last week under the leadership of caretaker manager, Russell Beeden. As usual there were several team changes due to unavailability but we arrived at Hazelwood for our Cup game against local rivals St Mary's with a strong squad of 14. We faced a strong wind against us in the first half but we defended excellently against competitive opposition and were unlucky to go into half time 1-0 down after a wind assisted free kick sailed over Ozel Ozerman into the goal. The second half started with a spell of early pressure but a dubious offside decision robbed Conor McGovern of a goal of the season contender after an excellent move and then Conor had a shot cleared off the line. As we pushed for the equaliser another cross was chested into the net to put us 2-0 down and then a free kick struck the post and St Mary's scored from the rebound to make it 3-0. At this point there were calls for me to change things but despite the scoreline we were still playing the better football and creating chances. The strength of our bench allowed me to bring on experienced attacking players in Derek Dorward and Nick Vertigans but I didn't change the shape of the team. We continued to create chances but it was not until the 75th minute that Steve Cokell beat the offside to pull a goal back. Stuart Byhurst then came on for his debut in midfield and when Nick Vertigans pulled another goal back our players were in confident mood after last week's comeback. Just two minutes later Derek Dorward scored the equaliser from Stuart Dorward's cross and there was now only going to be one winner. In the last 10 minutes, Conor McGovern hit the bar, Del missed a one on one chance and Nick had a penalty saved in injury time. Extra time is usually a worry for us with several older players but the fact that we had used three good substitutes was an advantage as St Mary's players were getting injuries and cramp. The crucial 4th goal was a Derek Dorward special which is already the outstanding contender for goal of the season as he volleyed into the top corner. An own goal under pressure from Danny Hagan from Conor's cross made the game safe at 5-3.