

Sunday 4th January 2004

Mercury Waltham Sunday League (Division Four) Match at Newgate Street Recreation Ground, Newgate Street Village

TOLMERS

4

**EDMONTON ROVERS
RESERVES**

3

HT 1-2

*Carter (Pen.) (25 mins.),
Crump (50, 65 mins.),
Leedham (70 mins)*

*Mc,Kenzie-Mc,Kay (5, 80 mins),
Bazzoni (20 mins)*

Tolmers Line-Up: Ian BRIGGS (GK); Rob WILSON, Peter ELFORD, John KEELING, Darren CHARTERS; Matt ROGERS, Chris CARTER, Nathan SOUTHWELL, John FORD; Andy CRUMP, Martin LEEDHAM **Subs.:** Neil JOBLING, David WHITEHEAD

Edmonton Rovers Line-Up (with Marks out of 10): Darryl JOHNSON (GK) (6); Scott ROBERTSON (6½), Matt STEELL (6½), Billy BURNHAM (5½), Terry DELLER (6); Jerome HARRISON (6), Paul REBAIRO (6), Leon Mc,KENZIE-Mc,KAY (7), Brian KAMUTEKU (6½); Lexton HARRISON (6), Lee BAZZONI (6½) **Subs. (None Used):** Russell BEEDEN, Ali AHMED, Mashood BURAAHEE

Referee: Carlos GOUMOL

Weather Conditions: Cold & Cloudy

Attendance: ?

Report (by Laurence Hughes...with help from information supplied by Billy Burnham !): For the Reserve Team's previous two matches, we had to endure protests from our opponents that we were fielding 'half our First Team' as we turned up with a similarly strong line-up on both occasions when our First Team did not have a match, so with the First Team actually *playing* on this date it was satisfying to prove that we *could* field a strong Reserve Team *without* their help. That was despite the absence of Lee Osborn (Flu), Barry Matthews (Pissed ?...allegedly) and Myron Mc,Kay (Resting his dodgy knee to give others a game), while at least five other registered players could have been brought into the squad...although we probably would have needed to phone them up (against club rules) to let them know we actually had a match on this date !

With Lee Bazzoni making his long-awaited debut having finally managed to wake up on a Sunday morning and Scott Robertson being let off the leash to play football again after spending two months getting married !, we fielded as strong a side as the Reserves had put out all season in terms of individual player ability. However, as with the First Team on their first game back after Christmas, the Reserves also had one or two players who had obviously over-indulged during the festive break. Indeed Scott was huffing and puffing after only five minutes, despite playing in defence, while Billy Burnham turned up with a spare tyre from an articulated lorry round his waist *this* time instead of the Ford Fiesta spare he was sporting before Christmas !

Nevertheless, we defended well early on and even managed to take an early lead after just five minutes when Scott Robertson managed to drag himself up the other end of the pitch to take a corner, and with expert left-footed deliveries from dead-ball situations being Scott's strong point, he managed to pick out Leon Mc,Kenzie-Mc,Kay in the area who nodded us in front.

With 4th-placed Tolmers fielding virtually a whole team of current or former players from Herts Senior County League (Saturday) side Cuffley, they not surprisingly had a lot of possession and soon started showing why they had won their previous two matches by scorelines of 10-0 and 4-0 with some slick passing and movement and better teamwork and fitness. However, Lee Bazzoni made an immediate impact for us up front in this match as he dropped deep to play a 'Sheringham role' and create numerous opportunities for Lexton Harrison and Leon Mc,Kenzie-Mc,Kay to use their pace and run at the Tolmers defence. We therefore managed to go 2-0 up in the 20th minute when all three of them combined with a good passing move which saw Lexton's rather mis-hit cross fall kindly to Bazzoni who slotted the ball in with a cool finish when other (e.g. Lexton ?) might have panicked. At that stage everything was going smoothly and were were confident of gaining a rare victory, but then came a turning point in the 25th minute when Tolmers, who had hardly had a shot thus far, were awarded a penalty when Terry Deller clipped the heels of one of their forwards, although he did get some of the ball at the same time and the decision may have been a bit harsh. The resulting spot kick from Tolmers' Chris Carter was not the greatest and Darryl Johnson managed to get a hand to it but could not prevent it from going in. We therefore went off at Half Time a bit disappointed that we had not been able to keep a clean sheet, even though we were leading 2-1.

The Second Half started quite evenly, but we then let Tolmers equalise with a silly goal just five minutes after the break when the ball was swung in left-footed from a free-kick on the right, but Darryl Johnson misjudged the flight and allowed Andy Crump a free header into an empty net.

It was then that Tolmers started getting on top, mainly thanks to them having players in their line-up who had been keeping themselves fit over Christmas playing in Senior Saturday football...unlike us of course. That saw our heads go down badly with plenty of arguments going on in our defence about who should be marking and/or sweeping and how far we should be pushing up to in an effort to stop Cuffley regular Crump (in particular) running rings round us. (We were actually lucky that Tolmers were without Tim Luxford for this match, who also plays up front for Cuffley on Saturdays and is an even *better* player !). With most of the Reserve Team's defence not being able to attend training regularly and Billy Burnham having worked a 12-hour overnight shift (staring at a CCTV and this website ?!) just before kick-off, that was maybe no surprise against opposition who were a lot better than White Hart Reserves and Dysons Rovers (our previous two opponents).

A third goal for Tolmers was therefore inevitable sooner or later, but once again it was a bad mistake by one of our defenders which gifted them the goal in the 65th minute. The ball was played down the left channel and Matt Steell went

across as sweeper and made an excellent tackle but then passed the ball straight to an opponent who then found himself as one of four players up against one defender (Billy Burnham). The ball was then played into the path of Andy Crump who rifled it into the top corner, giving Darryl Johnson no chance.

Although we were struggling at the back though, we still of course had a good outlet up front and were well capable of scoring again ourselves, but Lexton Harrison kept electing not to shoot when in a good position to do so after doing brilliantly in the build-up and unfortunately that club record six-goal haul against B.B.F.C. a couple of seasons ago is now but a distant memory. (Maybe Lexton needs to have a look at that video again !?). Meanwhile, Lee Bazzoni was obviously struggling with his fitness having not played for several years, but he looked a lot more likely to score and was unlucky with one superbly struck volley from a corner which Leon Mc,Kenzie-Mc,Kay inadvertently got in the way of. We had to work for our chances though, as the Tolmers defence were a lot more organised and were not making the sort of costly mistakes that afflicted our own back four, the worst of them coming in the 70th minute and which left us 4-2 down with no real chance of winning the game...Billy Burnham being the culprit this time when he hesitated in making a clearance from a through ball and allowed Martin Leedham to take the ball off him and beat Darryl Johnson in a one-on-one.

We did manage to claw one goal back in the 80th minute though, when Billy Burnham went forward for a corner to try and atone for his error, and when keeper Ian Briggs failed to hold his low shot, it bobbed up in the air for Leon Mc,Kenzie-Mc,Kay to head in from close range and make it 4-3.

We were unable to find an equaliser though and therefore slumped to another defeat which still leaves us in a fair bit of trouble near the bottom of the table, especially with bottom club Rosemill Reserves gaining a shock 3-2 victory against Northmet Riverside Reserves.

Although the scoreline looks like a reasonable result against such in-form opposition, our Reserve Team players and Management were very upset at throwing away a 2-0 lead so easily and there were quite a few harsh words spoken during and after the game. Although that shows a good will to win, we need to stop all the arguing and sort a few things out...hopefully one of these days, all our Reserve Team defenders will turn up to training at the same time and Trevor Hughes can give them some proper coaching (if he is not watching Arsenal !?).