

Sunday 7th April 2002
 MERCURY WALTHAM SUNDAY LEAGUE (DIVISION ONE) MATCH AT HOME TO UPSHIRE COACH & HORSES
 KICK OFF 10.35 AM. (Stavros Late) AS HAZELWOOD SPORTS GROUND
 SCORE: EDMONTON ROVERS 1 UPSHIRE COACH & HORSES 1 HALF-TIME: 0-1

TEAM	MARKS OUT OF 10	SCORERS
1. GK ¹ Stavros ELIA	7	
2. RB ³ Robin PRYKE	7	
3. LB ² Steve BEASLEY (CAPTAIN)	7	
4. RM ⁹ Paul ELLERKER	7	
5. SW ¹⁰ Tony SPELWER	7	
6. CM ⁴ Paul WOOLSTON	7	
7. CM ^{How 5} Paul REBAIRO	7½	
8. CM ¹¹ Stuart DORWARD	7	
9. CF ⁷ Steve COKEN	7½	
10. CM ⁸ Marco ELLERKER	7	51 mins, TRAINED
11. LM ⁶ Derek DORWARD	7	
12. —	—	
14. —	—	
15. —	—	
16. —	—	
17. —	—	

OPPONENTS GOAL TIMES: BARRY ROONEY (39 mins).
 OTHER CLUB MEMBERS PRESENT: L. HUGHES
 GROUND 15 REFEREE: DENIS COVENTRY
 CLUB LINESMAN: TREVOR HUGHES REFEREES: MARK (OUT OF 10) - 9
 BOOKINGS: ALBERT PARIS (UPSHIRE) (68 mins)
 DROPPING OFFS:
 WEATHER CONDITIONS: DRY AND SUNNY. SLIGHT BREEZE FROM CORNER TO CORNER FINE
 STATE OF PITCH: BONE DRY AND BUMPY. (BARE IN MADE, LONG GRASS DOWN WINGS.)

Report: With our hopes of either winning the Division One Title or finishing as Runners-Up having more or less gone after our demoralising defeat to third-placed Broxbourne Rangers the week before, a number of our players/Club Management Committee Members decided to give this rather tough-looking game a miss and do 'other things' (such as work voluntary overtime, 'go out/away with the bird' or just sleep !?)...even though they will undoubtedly deny it and say that they really wanted to play (or act as Club Linesman !) and were 'gutted' to miss out !

This meant we had no substitutes whatsoever, Manager Trevor Hughes running the line again and Derek Dorward's girlfriend Halina almost having to act as our 'physio' because she was the only one on the touchline (apart from the cameraman), so with League leaders Upshire Coach & Horses turning up with what appeared to be a full-strength squad (with four 'quality' substitutes) and numerous noisy supporters (especially the female one !), it looked like it was going to be one of those 'nightmare' days when everything went wrong for us.

In fact keeper Stavros Elia nearly made things even worse when he turned up at Northaw's Old Owens Sports Ground at 10.10.a.m. (a week too early) to find none of us there !...Stavros this time not reading his Club Circular or this website and seemingly just *guessing* what the Fixtures might be !?

Thankfully though (after a frantic phone call), he managed to turn up at Hazelwood just in time to avoid us getting our first Club Fine from the League for five years, although he nearly let in a silly goal after just 30 seconds and was no doubt very relieved to see Upshire's Ged Doyle half-volley wide of an empty net from 6 yards !

That chance came about because of the bone-hard, dry & bobbly pitch and unfortunately it was those conditions which didn't make it a particularly enjoyable game to play in or to watch as the ball spent most of the time up in the air or off for a throw-in. However, apart from that early near miss we looked a lot more solid defensively than we had against Broxbourne Rangers the week before as Paul Rebaïro (making his first start since early December) came into a midfield holding role and the competitive Paul Ellerker (playing his first game since breaking his shoulder back in January) filled in on the right of midfield, thereby replacing the more attack-minded John Beasley & Conor McGovern, who along with Lee Osborn, Scott Robertson & Gary Odell, were all unavailable. Also returning to the side was Steve Cokell up front, but along with Derek Dorward, he was guilty of missing one or two good chances in the First Half which could have given us a Half-Time lead. However, it was Upshire's defensive midfielder Barry Rooney who headed in the only goal of the Half at the near post from a quickly-taken free-kick after all our players had been distracted from defending it by both Stuart Dorward having an 'argument' with Upshire's Albert Paris off the ball and the referee's whistle being blown for the free-kick to be taken...all at the same time. (Was this some sort of rehearsed set-piece move ?!)

With Stuart struggling with a calf injury and no substitutes available, we looked to be heading for a certain defeat at this stage, but we really 'dug deep' in the Second Half and matched Upshire in terms of possession and chances created with Marco Ellerker earning us a deserved point with a low shot in the 51st minute which bobbed over the dive of keeper Danny Piper. (Thank You, Dodgy Pitch...for once !)

With Upshire Manager Joe Edwards commenting afterwards that the game was played more like a Pre-Season Friendly, it showed that we had produced a good disciplined performance against the odds, as they were obviously fired-up to win at the start, but because none of our players committed any silly fouls to make the game a physical battle it worked in our favour and everyone can be proud of their performance for not reacting to any 'wind-ups or verbals'...not that there were many on this occasion.