

Wednesday 7th April 2004

Mercury Waltham Sunday League Reserve Cup Final at Wormley Rovers F.C.

EDMONTON ROVERS RESERVES

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UPSHIRE COACH & HORSES
RESERVES

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Smith (30 mins.)

Edmonton Rovers Reserves Line-Up (with Marks out of 10): Russell BEEDEN (GK) (7); Lee OSBORN (7), Paul REBAIRO (6½), Matt STEELL (7½), Terry DELLER (6½); Leon Mc,KENZIE-Mc,KAY (6½), Brian KAMUTEKU (6½), Peter MURPHY (6½), Barry MATTHEWS (6); Lexton HARRISON (7½), Myron Mc,KAY (6) **Subs. Used:** Foyso! AHMED (6), Mashood BURAAHEE (6)

Upshire Coach & Horses Reserves Line-Up: Dave BEDFORD (GK); Robin SAUNDERS, Eddie ANDREWS, Mark BREWER, Paul BRADNAM, Martin GILBERT, Richard PIPER, Colin ORPIN, Peter MOORE, Mark SMITH, Chris REYNOLDS **Subs.:** Sam PAYNE, Neil GLASSON, Matt KAY, Jamie HOLD, Steve CHILCOTT

Referee: John STOCKMAN

Assistant Referees: Lee DeVILBISS & Michael MACKEY Snr.

Weather Conditions: Cold with no wind

Attendance: 150 ?

Report: When our Reserve Team players found out that their Cup Final was to be played on what is more or less a 'trailed-off' park pitch rather than a proper stadium they may well have wondered whether it was worth all the bother of beating Rosemill Reserves 6-0 to get this far. However, once they turned up (an hour before kick-off in most cases...as per the Cup Final 'rules') and sampled all the protocol such as passes awaiting them on the gate, then being shown the changing rooms and given a complimentary match-day programme with detailed player profiles of themselves in it ('nicked' from this website of course), they soon got themselves tuned in to the occasion despite the less than glamorous surroundings. The pre-match nervousness then started to show as our players puffed their way through endless fags outside the changing room entrance as they waited to get changed with the intention of not getting out on the pitch too early for their warm-ups and burning up too much energy (which was what Upshire appeared to be doing !).



Meanwhile though, Ali Ahmed, Foyso! Ahmed, Mashood Burahee & Brian Kamuteku were still driving round the Borough of Broxbourne somewhere trying to find the ground, and when they finally strolled into the changing rooms half-an-hour before kick off (and therefore half an hour late !), they then went and put the Reserve Team's kit on from a bag left in the corner without realising that all their team-mates had just gone out on the pitch for their warm-up wearing the First Team's kit (and therefore the same shirt numbers in some cases !)

In fact they then had to change shirts for a third time just before the kick-off when we were suddenly informed by a League Official that it had been decided at a League Referees Meeting during the week that they would not allow us to wear our usual Jade & Black in the Cup Final because it clashed with Upshire's Green & White Hoops...this decision having been made by people who were totally unaware that we had never had to change colours before in our numerous other meetings with

Upshire Coach & Horses' teams and without even *looking* at the shirts...and they forgot to inform us that we had to change ! Fortunately, our spare set of Orange Shirts had been brought along anyway, but it meant that two and a half sets of kit had to be washed after the match instead of one, and it was clearly something that could have been avoided.

Once the match got under way, it was Upshire who settled first as they had been there before and were fielding a whole team of experienced players, many of whom had played in the Premier Division or in Senior Saturday football. Of course this was our Reserves' first-ever Cup Final (in their first season) and our First Team had not been in a Final for 19 years either, so maybe it wasn't a surprise that we all looked a bit overawed right from the start.

Upshire of course had fired themselves up (as they always do) and played at a fast tempo right from the off despite the big

pitch, which we were hoping would have suited the pace of Lexton Harrison and Leon Mc,Kenzie-Mc,Kay in particular. However, Upshire cleverly used their experience to sit deep and not allow that while looking to hit us on the break, which meant it was more difficult for us to protect stand-in goalkeeper Russell Beeden from facing clear-cut chances...Beeden having been 'forced' to go in goal because of Simon Jackson's absence with a knee injury and Billy Burnham's 'refusal' to play in that position. Beeden though, did make a good point-blank save to stop Upshire scoring from a close-range header after about 20 minutes, but he couldn't stop us going a goal down after 30 minutes when Terry Deller's interception from a through ball ran straight into the path of forward Mark Smith, who drilled a good finish low into the bottom corner as Lee Osborn and Paul Rebairo both lost their footing while trying to regain their positions.

Fortunately though, we showed some good character after that and with more and more of our supporters turning up (late of course !?), we started to get used to the occasion and it then became a more even contest and Peter Murphy was unlucky not to equalise with a shot on the turn against the foot of the post as we had a good spell just before half-time.

However we had to go in at half-time 1-0 down, but Manager Mark Howley didn't need to throw any of the cups of tea that had been provided for us around at people as we were not playing that badly. Lexton Harrison apparently did some sort of rousing speech in there though to fire us up for the Second Half and indeed he went on to have an excellent match, as did Matt Steell in defence, but although we created more chances in the Second Half we didn't really force Upshire keeper Dave Bedford into making any difficult saves...the nearest we came to equalising being a free-kick curled towards the far post by Peter Murphy, but being missed by everyone with Matt Steell almost getting some contact on the ball.

Russell Beeden though had to make an excellent save with his legs late on to stop Upshire's Mark Smith making it 2-0 in a one-on-one situation as we threw men forward, while Paul Rebairo was lucky not to get sent off after Linesman Michael Mackey Senior flagged for him fouling Chris Reynolds when he was the last man, although to most people in the ground it looked as if Reynolds had trod on the ball and fell over of his own accord. Rebairo somehow escaped with a Booking and that was all he ended up with as Upshire held on to lift the League Reserve Cup for the second time in three years despite us really putting them under pressure with a valiant effort in the last 10 minutes.

That meant it was yet another trophy-less season for the club then, but despite our defeat our players really enjoyed the occasion as it was a good clean but competitive game with no trouble whatsoever (much to the League's relief of course). It was also good to see our players smiling when receiving their Runners-Up awards and applauding their opponents during the presentations, something which doesn't always happen at League Cup Finals and our Reserves definitely enhanced the club's reputation with the League for their sporting behaviour on the night.