

Sunday 7th December 2003				
Mercury Waltham Sunday League Premier Division Match at Town Mead, Waltham Abbey				
UPSHIRE COACH & HORSES	0	EDMONTON ROVERS	1	HT 0-1
		E.Ibekwem (31 mins.)		
Upshire Coach & Horses Line-Up: Danny PIPER; Richard DAVIES, Steve KEY, Richard PIPER, Alan BREWER; Mark LAWS, Adam GURNETT, Paul MITCHELL, Alex HOTTENPOW; Mark SMITH, Ged DOYLE Sub.: Sam PAYNE				
Edmonton Rovers Line-Up (with Marks out of 10): Simon JACKSON (GK) (7½); Chidi IBEKWEM (6½), Stuart DORWARD (6½), Paul WOOLSTON (7½), Gary COKELL (6); Derek DORWARD (6½), Paul ELLERKER (7), Marco ELLERKER (6½), Eric IBEKWEM (6½); Conor McGOVERN (6½), Steve COKELL (6½) Subs.: Paul REBAIRO (6½), Lexton HARRISON (6½), Leon McKENZIE-McKAY (6½)				
Referee: Denis COVENTRY	Weather Conditions: Sunny & Dry, but Very Cold		Attendance: 20	



Report: We continued our climb away from the relegation area into mid-table 'security' with this narrow win against our old rivals Upshire Coach & Horses, but the game was very nearly called off due to the groundsman failing to turn up to open the changing rooms at the initial venue (Larsens Recreation Ground in Waltham Abbey). Thanks to numerous last-minute phone calls though, Upshire Coach & Horses managed to find another pitch at the nearby Town Mead Centre and we therefore had to travel in convoy to play there instead...and kick-off at 10.53.a.m. instead of 10.30. That suited Derek Dorward, who was running late after driving back from Swindon, Steve & Gary Cokell, who were driving round in circles in Waltham Abbey at 10.15.a.m. trying to find Larsens Rec, and Stuart Dorward, who was still sitting on the toilet at home at 10.15.a.m. (after another night of 20 strong Lagers and/or Vodka & Red Bulls, Pizzas, Kebabs & Curries ?!). They were all ready to start by the time we arrived at Town

Mead though, but we still had a lot of sorting out to do as three players had pulled out at fairly short notice (as usual), these being Tony Speller, who informed us at the Snooker Night on Friday that he had suspected broken ribs, Robin Pryke, who phoned on Saturday night to say that he still had a stiff neck and Steve Beasley, who phoned at 9.30.a.m. on the day of the match to say that he had an injured ankle after tripping over at Stuart Dorward's Stag Do the week before ! That left us with just the bare eleven again for the second week running and resulted in quite a few heated arguments as the rest of our players arrived at Larsens Rec, particularly regarding why messers Speller, Pryke and especially Steve Beasley had not made a decision earlier in the week that they would be missing this match and also why Manager Trevor Hughes was not calling up Reserve Team players at the last minute to act as substitutes, particularly when they had an amazing 18 players turn up for their match at Enfield Playing Fields !

As it turned out, the Reserve Team's match was called off in the end due to the referee not turning up, so we were able to name three of them as substitutes anyway, which was just as well, as Gary Cokell went and pulled a hamstring after only 5 minutes and was then just a passenger in midfield until Paul Rebaire arrived to come on after 29 minutes and replace him. That saw Rebaire play at left-back with Eric Ibekwem going back into the midfield position that he started the match in and it was Eric who actually gave us the lead just two minutes later when he slid the ball in from close range after Steve Cokell had miscued a far post volley from Marco Ellerker's cross. In fact that was to be the only goal of the game, as both sides looked less than convincing with their finishing, even though both goalkeepers had to make one or two good saves while some good 'last-ditch' challenges by defenders also thwarted the attackers. With Upshire Coach & Horses having lost 6-2 to Lea Valley Royals the week before and without a win in the Premier Division so far this season, we were expecting an easier game, but with left-back Alan Brewer re-instated during the week after having a lengthy suspension overturned, Upshire were obviously fielding a stronger side defensively and with the pitch being small and very bobbly and the low sun and blustery wind not helping matters, there was no way that we could reproduce the sort of flowing passing football we managed against Broxbourne Rangers at Hazelwood the week before. Indeed Upshire ended up having twice as many shots as us and we were probably a bit lucky to win on the balance of play, but once again it was our good defensive organisation that got us out of trouble when our 'flair' players were not quite on form and it bodes well that we are definitely proving to be a hard side to beat.