

WHITE HART	1	EDMONTON ROVERS	1	HT 1-0
Cooper (41 mins.)		Nxumalo (69 mins.)		

WHITE HART'S LINE-UP: Ben SMITH (GK); Darren CROSS, Martin GARWOOD, Neil PURKISS, Andy PULLINGER; Ricky KYAGABA, Matt CHARLES, Jason COOPER, Mark NICOLL; Jay RICHARDSON, Ian WELCH **Subs.:** Tom BUSH (On for Kyagaba 74 mins.), Jason GARWOOD (Not Used), Glen ELEY (Not Used), Bill SMITH (Not Used)

EDMONTON ROVERS LINE-UP (with Marks out of 10): Ozel OZERMAN (GK) (7); Terry MOORE (7), Alan BARNARD (7½), Martin LOVEDAY (7); Tony KING (6½); Clark WILLIAMS (6½), Danny HAGAN (5½) (*Sent Off 71 mins.*), Steve COKELL (7); Leon Mc,KENZIE-Mc,KAY (6½), Conor Mc,GOVERN (6½), Vernon NXUMALO (6½) **Sub.:** Tem ADIL (On for King 72 mins.) (6)

Referee: Kevin HUGHES **Weather Conditions:** Sunny but Cold **Attendance:** 15

**Factual
Report (by
Laurence
Hughes):**

After losing 10-0 to St. Mary's the previous week, it was rather worrying that our next opponents White Hart had beaten them 1-0 during a current run of form that had seen them remain



unbeaten in their last five matches and having only conceded five goals in their last six games ! However, we had beaten White Hart 4-1 the last time we played them at this venue just over three years ago when we were both struggling in the Premier Division, and in fact our First Team had only ever lost once to them at Waltham Cross Playing Fields in several previous meetings over the years. We were also able to field a stronger side this week with a substitute available in the shape of Tem Adil, Leon Mc,Kenzie-Mc,Kay returning in attack, and most importantly, a much stronger defence with Alan Barnard, Martin Loveday and goalkeeper Ozel Ozerman all available this time.

Manager Trevor Hughes still decided to stick with the 3-4-3 formation he had tried against St. Mary's though, mainly due to a reluctance to put midfield players as full-backs, and also because of the availability of Mc,Kenzie-Mc,Kay and Vernon 'Kizza' Nxumalo, both of whom are better in attack than in midfield. With White Hart now playing in green these days though (after years of playing in all blue), it meant we had to quickly get used to more unfamiliarity in the shape of our orange 'Opera House' nightclub-sponsored shirts that we last wore in our now-defunct Reserve Team's Cup Final back in 2004 and our First Team last wore about 10 years ago ! In fact the last players to wear the orange shirts were actually Adrian Mole and Johnny Vegas (see the [3rd & 4th rows down here](#)), but despite the shirts being 'stretched' somewhat by all that blubber, Tem Adil and Ozel Ozerman both struggled to fit into them when they tried them on for size in

the changing rooms beforehand. Presumably Martin Loveday must have had Johnny Vegas's shirt, as he seemed to have no problems fitting into his one !

At least the small pitch (with penalty areas marked out [a yard away from the touchline](#)) suited our usual lack of fitness though, and with White Hart not being prolific goalscorers like St. Mary's and other sides we have been playing recently, it ended up being a closely fought game, especially in the First Half as both sides had mainly half-chances apart from one chance in the 31st minute when Alan Barnard had to scramble the ball away off the line. However, White Hart did manage to take the lead in the 41st minute when Jason Cooper scored from close range after Martin Loveday had inadvertently headed on a long throw-in straight into his path.

We didn't let our heads go down from that and had a good positive half-time team talk though, but we may well have crumbled had White Hart made it 2-0 just after the break when we were lucky to see a shot from Matt Charles come down off the underside of the bar but not over the line. In fact we were then given a lifeline just three minutes later against the run of play when Referee Kevin Hughes spotted an innocuous infringement on Leon Mc,Kenzie-Mc,Kay by White Hart defender Garwood inside the area which earned him a booking and us a penalty. With our regular penalty-takers Stuart Dorward and Nick Vertigans both missing this match through a bad back and work commitments in Geneva respectively, Clark Williams grabbed the ball (for some reason) before anybody else, but only succeeded in chipping it 'at a nice height' for keeper Ben Smith to make an easy save if he guessed the right way...which he did of course ! However, we continued to defend well and not give White Hart too many clear-cut chances, and with the pace and trickery of Leon Mc,Kenzie-Mc,Kay and Vernon 'Kizza' Nxumalo up front this week, both of whom had not even met each other before despite playing for us on and off for three years, we were always going to be in with a chance of nicking a goal on the break. Indeed that was exactly what happened in the 69th minute when Leon put Kizza through to beat keeper Smith to the ball in a one-on-one and equalise.



At that stage it looked as if we might even go on to win the game, but then Danny Hagan went and got himself sent off two minutes later for a retaliatory studs-first lunge at an opponent after a bout of shirt pulling and

wrestling, leaving us down to 10 men and wondering when the last time was that we had somebody shown a straight red for 'violent conduct'. (Well over 10 years ago as it happens !). No doubt the 35-day ban in January & February and the £33.00 Fine will make him think about doing that again ? Manager Hughes therefore immediately made a tactical switch by bringing on central midfielder Tem Adil into Hagan's position and taking off Tony King, who had been playing in another unfamiliar role once again on the right side of a midfield four this time, but ending up more as a wing-back. That saw Leon Mc,Kenzie-Mc,Kay being dropped back into that position, and although White Hart had a couple of good chances in the last 15 minutes which were scrambled away or dived upon by Ozel Ozerman (who had a much better game than of late), we managed to survive fairly comfortably and could even have won the game if one or two players had shown a bit more ambition.

There was no doubt that despite their recent run of good form, White Hart's style of play (and the small size of the pitch) actually seemed to suit us when other teams such as St. Mary's and Northmet (Riverside) have struggled against them for some reason. Because of that, our season may not be quite so dead after all, and maybe there are other teams in the Division that we are

yet to play who we could get a result against ?

After the match, we then had our traditional 'last game before Christmas' All-Day Drinking Session down On Broadway (or 'Leo Sayer' as most of our players prefer to call it), but unfortunately it was rather a poor turnout this time, presumably because most of [these forms](#) had been filled in as 'Request Turned Down' ?

TREVOR HUGHES'S MANAGER'S REPORT

We suffered our record defeat last week but there was no major inquest and concern about not being able to field a team for Sunday's game against White Hart. Stuart Dorward was injured, Derek Dorward and Nick Vertigans were working and Tony Speller had family commitments but we had Ozel Ozerman available to play in goal and key defenders Alan Barnard and Martin Loveday returned along with forward Leon McKenzie-McKay. This meant I could field a positive 3-4-3 formation with Tem Adil on the subs bench. We felt that we had the better of the possession in the first half but White Hart had a solid defence and took the lead after 41 minutes when a long throw was inadvertently flicked on by Martin Loveday and the White Hart forward finished easily from close range. After a positive half time team talk we nearly went 2-0 down when a screamer rattled our crossbar following a corner but a few minutes later we were given the chance of an equaliser when an off the ball foul on Leon was spotted by the referee who awarded a penalty. Clark Williams grabbed the ball confidently as he had scored twice in penalty shoot outs this season but his shot was easily saved by the White Hart keeper. Fortunately, we got the equaliser on 69 minutes when Vernon 'Kizza' Nxumalo found an excellent finish after Leon's through ball left him one on one with the keeper. Danny Hagan was getting frustrated in midfield and asked to be substituted but he committed a reckless challenge and received a straight red to put us down to 10 men. Tem Adil came on to play centre midfield and Leon dropped back into midfield but with 3-4-2 we were still able to be positive and could have still won the game in the last 10 minutes. White Hart were also pushing for a winner but Oz did well in goal and 1-1 was probably a fair result. At least it was a more positive way to end the year and give us a point as we look forward to 2008.