

**Sunday 3rd February 2008**

Mercury Waltham Sunday League Division One Match at Hazelwood Sports Ground

|                                                     |          |                                            |          |        |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----------|--------------------------------------------|----------|--------|
| <b>EDMONTON ROVERS</b>                              | <b>2</b> | <b>WHITE HART</b>                          | <b>2</b> | HT 1-1 |
| McGovern (22 mins.),<br>S.Dorward (Pen.) (83 mins.) |          | Richardson (36 mins.),<br>Cross (64 mins.) |          |        |

**EDMONTON ROVERS LINE-UP (with Marks out of 10):** Martin LOVEDAY (GK) (7½); Terry MOORE (7), Alan BARNARD (7), Paul WOOLSTON (7); Tony KING (6½), Danny HAGAN (6½), Clark WILLIAMS (6), Steve COKELL (6½); Stuart DORWARD (6½); Conor McGOVERN (6½), Vernon 'Kizza' NXUMALO (6½) **Subs.:** Derek DORWARD (On for King 68 mins.) (6½), Tony SPELLER (On for Williams 68 mins.) (6)

**WHITE HART'S LINE-UP:** Ben SMITH; Darren CROSS, Martin GARWOOD, Jamie COOK, Jack HICKMAN; Ricky KYAGABA, Ian WELCH, Dave BAIRD, Mark NICOLL; Jay RICHARDSON, Jason SEABROOK **Subs.:** None Used

**Referee:** Les KYPRIANOU

**Weather Conditions:** Sunny, Cold &  
Very Windy

**Attendance:**  
12

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

After three weeks of inactivity, we finally had some decent weather during the week to give us a perfect pitch (for the time of year) at Hazelwood and a game at last.

Amazingly, Manager Trevor



Hughes only had to make one change to his starting line-up following our 3-2 win against Uniques on the 6th January, with Vernon 'Kizza' Nxumalo returning in attack to replace the seemingly now-departed Leon Mc,Kenzie-Mc,Kay as we fielded near enough a full-strength side apart from those who are now out for the rest of the season with long-term injuries and other commitments.

White Hart though, had gone eight games unbeaten before this match, although one of those fixtures was a 1-1 draw with us just before Christmas where we certainly upset the form-book, so they were no doubt a bit more wary of us this time. However, White Hart did seem to be in a bit of disarray just before the kick-off when they found out that their change strip of red and black had several shirts missing, thereby leaving defender Jack Hickman having to play in a black sweatshirt instead (albeit with red piping down the arms). They also kicked off 10 minutes late, but they still seemed to be fielding a strong side, especially defensively, despite having four or five different players in their line up from our last encounter with them.

They also had the benefit of kicking towards the 'cow-shed' end in the First Half with the sun in Martin Loveday's eyes and a fierce freezing cold gale-force wind blowing straight behind them that threatened to send my video gantry/scaffolding and tripod into orbit on the touchline on several occasions. With White Hart having played the week before (beating Chase Side Old Boys 5-1 in the process), it wasn't surprising that they created several chances early on then, but a couple of goal-line clearances from Tony King and two or three excellent saves by Loveday from fiercely-struck shots kept us on level terms before we took a 'shock' lead against the run of play in the 22nd minute as Vernon 'Kizza' Nxumalo's cross caused a mix-up in the 6-yard box between keeper Ben Smith and defender Darren Cross, leaving Conor Mc,Govern to scramble in the loose ball via Smith's glove for a very scrappy goal. Some of White Hart's players appealed for a foul on the keeper by Stuart Dorward from Kizza's cross, but the video shows that he was actually impeded by his own player and Referee Les Kyprianou was right to allow the goal to stand.

Unfortunately though, we couldn't hang onto that lead against such a strong wind, and White Hart's Jay Richardson made it 1-1 in the 36th minute when he drilled a free-kick into the top corner from just outside the area, giving Loveday no chance.

We managed to come off at Half-Time on level terms though thanks to some good defending, and with the wind behind us in the Second Half, we were confident of gaining another good win. However, White Hart's defence had only let in an average of one goal a game during their 8-game unbeaten run and they were proving to be a real tough nut to crack, and we found it really difficult to create clear-cut chances, although typical of our luck, the wind started dying down considerably of course ! We then found ourselves 2-1 down after 64 minutes as White Hart defender Darren Cross sliced a cross over Loveday's head and into the far top corner for a really freak goal against the run of play, but we didn't let our heads go down and the introduction of two good substitutes in Derek Dorward and Tony Speller made a difference with Del nearly equalising straight away. White Hart did nearly go 3-1 up on the break in the 82nd minute though, and it needed some good defending from Terry Moore, another good save from man-of-the-match Loveday and a bit of luck for us with a shot hitting the post to see us remain in contention.



We kept plugging away at the other end though, and a sliding 'man and ball' challenge from White Hart skipper Martin Garwood on Conor McGovern in the 83rd minute saw us being awarded a penalty by

Referee Kyprianou which seemed to be the correct decision as far as we were concerned, although White Hart's players protested vociferously. Stuart Dorward then stepped up to tuck away probably the best spot-kick he has ever taken for the club in terms of direction and confidence, giving keeper Smith no chance, and we then looked the more likely side to score a winner in the few minutes remaining.

That became even more so when Garwood, having already been booked earlier in the Half for a foul on McGovern, got himself sent-off in the 87th minute after being shown a second yellow card for dissent, but then keeper Smith decided to join in with a tirade of abuse at Referee Kyprianou from about 80 yards away to earn himself an inevitable straight red card, leaving his side down to 9 men.

Of course, typical of us, that didn't stop White Hart getting in a decent shot on target as soon as play resumed, but with 90 minutes on the clock and the sent-off Garwood (and another White Hart player ?) continuing to abuse Mr. Kyprianou from the touchline, the final whistle was blown without any injury time being played whatsoever as the Referee was clearly concerned as to his own safety. Not that we complained, as a 2-2 draw was the most that we deserved against a very well-organised and hard-to-beat side. With White Hart likely to lose both their skipper and their goalkeeper to lengthy suspensions as a result of their indiscipline in this match though, other teams will benefit from that which will now make it harder for us to climb up the table, but at least we have proved to ourselves that we are not as bad as we thought we were after that dismal run of form back in late-November/early December.

### **TREVOR HUGHES'S MANAGER'S REPORT**

*Having only played one match in January we were still unbeaten in 2008 so the mood in the dressing room was positive as we sought to continue our unbeaten run of two matches against a White Hart side who were unbeaten in their last eight games. I was almost able to field the same team for two matches in a row with only one change as Vernon 'Kizza' Nxumalo replaced Leon McKenzie-McKay who is still waiting to complete a transfer to McKenzies. There was a strong wintry gale to contend with at Hazelwood but we defended well with two goal line clearances by Tony King and several saves by Martin Loveday before we took the lead against the run of play after 22 minutes. A deep cross from Kizza was dropped by the goalkeeper after a push from one of his own defenders. Conor McGovern got a touch but the dubious goals panel will have to adjudicate between an own goal and another for Conor towards the record. We continued to defend well but a superb free kick, hit with the wind behind it, flew into the top corner to give White Hart an equaliser in the 36<sup>th</sup> minute. We started the second half with a lot more possession with the wind in our favour but this time it was us who conceded against the run of play when a sliced cross dropped into the top corner of the net to leave Martin Loveday with no chance. Tony Speller and Derek Dorward came on to give us fresh legs and Del almost scored with his first touch as the White Hart keeper made an excellent save but Del's second touch was blasted way over the bar. A breakaway by White Hart almost wrapped the game up but a block by Terry Moore, a save by Martin Loveday and the post all kept the ball out. Almost immediately we were awarded a penalty for a foul on Conor McGovern. It looked a clear penalty to me and all of our players but White Hart's protests indicated they did not agree. However, Stuart Dorward coolly slotted home the equaliser and we had seven minutes left to force a winner. Unfortunately, White Hart's central defender who had been excellent all game complained about another decision to receive a second yellow card and get sent off. The goalkeeper then used foul and abusive language towards the referee for a straight red and we thought we had three minutes plus stoppage time to force a winner against nine men. However, there were more abusive and threatening comments made towards the referee and he only played one minute before blowing the final whistle. The referee may have just forgotten to add the time on but if he did blow up early it was quite understandable although if he had abandoned the game we may have been awarded the points. Overall we thought a draw was probably a fair result and at least we have extended our unbeaten run.*