

Sunday 1st October 2006

Mercury Waltham Sunday League Division One Match at Hazelwood Sports Ground

EDMONTON ROVERS	0	WORMLEY ROVERS	1	HT 0-0
		Lee (54 mins.)		

EDMONTON ROVERS LINE-UP (with Marks out of 10): Darryl JOHNSON (GK) (7½); Paul WOOLSTON (7½), Alan BARNARD (7½), Terry MOORE (7½); Clark WILLIAMS (6½), Tony SPELLER (7), Peter MURPHY (6½); Nick VERTIGANS (6½), Stuart DORWARD (6½); Conor McGOVERN (6½), Steve COKELL (6½) **Subs.:** Kris SPYROU (6), Colin BESTER (6½), Gary COKELL (Not Used)

WORMLEY ROVERS LINE-UP: Chris DENT; Keith SMITH, Paul BUSHNELL, Jamie DIX, Glen HOLMAN; Paul LEEK, Alex SANSFORD, Robbie COOPER, Ryan ACKERMAN; Darren LEE, Kevin DEDMAN **Subs.:** Dave BELL, Steve HOLMAN, Matt WRIGHT

Referee: Paul FULLER

Weather Conditions: Heavy Rain 1st Half,
Dry 2nd Half

Attendance:
18

Factual Report (by Laurence Hughes): As our opponents Wormley Rovers had won four out of four in Division One so far, scoring 12 goals in the process, last season we would have gone into a match like this almost expecting to concede three or four goals, but maybe score one or two ourselves. However, our goal-less draw against Enfield Crusaders and part of the previous match against Frenford where we looked very solid defensively had given us confidence that we could keep good sides like this at bay, and so it proved apart from just one rather fortunate goal that proved to be the winner. Although Andrew Warmerdam had declared himself generally unavailable from now onwards due to work and family commitments, the addition of Alan

Barnard to the squad for this season had compensated for that and also coincided with us 'stumbling upon?' a 3-3-2-2 formation which seems to have made us a lot more secure defensively, although the sudden availability of first-choice keeper Darryl Johnson for both this match and the previous weeks' game was obviously a major factor.

Although key midfielder Paul Ellerker decided to drop out instead of

risking playing while extremely pissed from an all-night party and with the previous weeks' forwards Derek Dorward and Tony King also unavailable due to work & social commitments respectively, such is the strength of our squad this season that we still had a couple of useful substitutes available, while the likes of Conor McGovern, Steve Cokell and Tony Speller were all highly experienced replacements in the starting line up for those three missing players. However, a failure to score in our two League





matches so far was always a worry, and we only really had one clear-cut chance in a tight First Half when midfielder Clark Williams fired a shot wide of the far post when it looked a lot easier to hit the target after doing well to work himself an opening. Wormley only had one real chance themselves in the first 45 minutes though, when Darryl Johnson fumbled a well-struck free-kick from Ryan Ackerman onto the



crossbar and was then lucky to see the rebound hit him on the back instead of bouncing in before being scrambled away. 'D.J. then had to take his gloves off and wring out the bucketful of rainwater that had accumulated in them though, so he had a reasonable excuse as most of the First Half had been played in a torrential downpour that saw all the spectators, substitutes and coaches dive for cover under bushes or in the changing rooms...leaving the cameraman to get totally drenched. Somehow though, the camera still managed to record everything despite the condensation warning light flashing on and off in the viewfinder (very alarming !), and although chances were few and far between in the First Half, it was a very high-standard match and a good game to watch.

With the rain stopping for the Second Half though, it became a lot easier for the players of both sides to control the ball and shoot, but Wormley had a bit of luck in doing so when they took the lead in the 54th minute, as Paul Leek's long-range shot hit forward Darren Lee on the foot, with the deflection giving Darryl Johnson no chance.

Leek and Lee were two of four players in the Wormley line-up who had been signed from the now-defunct The Wheatsheaf during the Summer to bolster their squad, the others being right-back Keith Smith and one of our own 'Greats Of The Past' Kevin Dedman, who was substituted half-way through the Second Half (without complaint) having not really had much of a chance because of our continued excellence in defence. In fact when Darryl Johnson had to make two or three good saves in the Second Half, mainly from Darren Lee, they were not as a result of mistakes by us defensively but by good play from Wormley. However, we had just as many shots at goal, if not more in the Second Half, but most of them ended up being far too comfortable for keeper Chris Dent to deal with or being hit wide by Stuart Dorward and Nick Vertigans, who along with Conor McGovern and Steve Cokell, continued to show a lack of confidence in front of goal even though their build-up play was excellent at times.

With the game drifting away from us, Manager Trevor Hughes then decided to add a bit more pace to the side by bringing on 18-year-olds Colin Bester and Kris Spyrou for defensive midfielders Tony Speller and Peter Murphy, and that certainly had an effect 10 minutes from time when Bester got in a perfect low cross for Steve Cokell to volley goalwards, but keeper Dent made a brilliant point-blank save to deny us a point which even Wormley admitted themselves that we deserved.

That proved to be our best chance of the match, and in fact we are now the only team in the whole League who are yet to score a goal this season. Most of the time that's been because of inspired goalkeeping by opposing keepers, but at least Darryl was up there with the best of them for this game, so we can gain some confidence from that.

'Murf's Alternative Report !!: If you like global warming, you would have loved it at Hazelwood on Sunday as Edmonton's Rovers hosted Wormley's for their first home game of the season. There was rain, shine and hail, indeed all that was missing from a biblical full house was a rainbow, and this was sadly fitting for there was to be no pot of gold at the end of 90 minutes' hard graft for Rovers.

Indeed, the morning got off to a pretty untidy start when referee Fuller entered the changing room. Recognising Terry Moore from some recent Saturday skirmish, he began to make the case for the defence to Rovers' defender over a none too flattering assessment. It very quickly travelled down some electronic cul-de-sac - Moore denied receiving a pertinent e-mail - and Mr Fuller went back to checking the team's studs. For most this involves the lifting of footwear though Colin Bester could have been forgiven for cocking a bling laden ear in the official's direction.

Manager Hughes stuck with his 3-5-2 formation with Tony Speller replacing Paul Ellerker in midfield and Conor McGovern and Steve Cokell returning as the forward pairing in place of Derek Dorward and Tony King.

With the coin tossed and ends chosen, Rovers lined up ready for the off. But referee Fuller had one more ace up his sleeve. "You lot, all look that way," he commanded. After the referee at Frenford had recently lined Rovers up as though ready for some non-existent national anthems, this took on the hue of another man doing it his way. Were we about to worship the autumnal sun or get down on our knees and pray? Somewhat nonplussed and rather gingerly Rovers complied, turning about face in the direction of the changing rooms. And when Mr Fuller started counting, it all became clear. He was checking our shirt numbers, no doubt in an attempt to head off any Graham Poll moments.

When the game finally kicked off it proved to be a very even affair. Both sides played their share of neat football through midfield, no mean effort during a ten minute torrential downpour, though there was a paucity of end product. The deluge caused everyone problems from the cameraman to the 'keeper, the latter reprising John Rice's pattercake moment against Trent Park. DJ's gloves were sodden having acted like a sponge but one thing they couldn't absorb was the ball as a speculative punt rained in on his goal. It seemed a run-of-the-mill take but the ball slid off Rovers' 'keeper's upturned palms and goalward. As it made its way over his head DJ turned dejectedly. He was resigned to his fate and already in mid "oh sh*t" when it rebounded off the bar enabling him to claw it away to safety.

This iffy moment was swiftly followed by another when referee Fuller stopped the game barking, "over here, this needs dealing with". We all knew what he was on about and Trevor Hughes made the longest walk in football, nappy bag in hand. Managers really do get all the sh*t jobs.

Half time arrived scoreless and the consensus was that the Jades were playing well. Manager Hughes, his hands washed of other matters, was able to record some degree of pleasure at what he was seeing as the team settled further into its new formation. The defending was stout and this week the showing in the other third had been more encouraging. He dispatched his charges urging them to eschew any temptation for the long ball.

Rovers attempted to follow instruction but the slight slope and zippy surface saw a few passes overhit. The match remained even and it was going to take something special to break the deadlock. But nothing special arrived. In its stead came one of those goals that if fortune is with a team, they are chalked up in the plus column, if they are against, in the minus. And Rovers are quite palpably in minus territory at the moment. An edge of area shot was going comfortably wide until the intervention of a Wormley forward who was most definitely lurking without intent. The ball spun off his unknowing foot and crept inside DJ's right hand post. To most in Jade this bystander had seemed offside but Gary Cokell on flag duty confirmed that he was level with Terry Moore and therefore innocent. It was a cruel blow.

Rovers continued to press and enjoy plenty of possession but, in the mud, clean chances were at a premium. Indeed DJ was probably called into slightly more action despite the run of play. And so, with 15 minutes to go, Manager Hughes withdrew Tony Speller and Murf for Colin Bester and Kris Spyrou. It was almost an inspired substitution as Bester ran on to a through ball from McGovern and made his way to the bye line before dispatching an excellent cross. It was met on the full by Steve Cokell but somehow Wormley's 'keeper got his body in the way. Like the winning goal scorer, Wormley's saviour knew little about it. In painful symmetry, both men had unwittingly done their jobs and both moments served to confirm that Rovers' luck is firmly out of town. But fortune favours the brave, they say, and so it's time for Rovers to play a few cards before the season's pattern is set.

TREVOR HUGHES'S MANAGER'S REPORT

After earning our first point of the season last week we played top of the table Wormley Rovers at Hazelwood. Darryl Johnson was available in goal for the second week running and Steve Cokell and Conor McGovern returned up front in place of Derek Dorward and Tony King. The only other team change saw Tony Speller replacing Paul Ellerker who had sent a text at 8.30 a.m. that he couldn't make it as he was 'still up' presumably meaning he was not yet home from an all night drinking session. I was able to keep the same formation that was successful last week and Alan Barnard, Terry Moore and Paul Woolston again looked comfortable in defence. We played some good football going forward and created several chances. Clark Williams missed our best chance shooting wide and Wormley's closest chance came when Darryl fumbled a free kick which then hit the bar because his 'gloves were wet'. Another 0-0 was beginning to look the likely scoreline until the 54th minute when a long range shot was deflected into the bottom corner off a Wormley forward who was standing just onside on the edge of the area. We had the most of the possession for the remainder of the game and, although Darryl had to make some good saves as we were caught on the break, we were mainly camped in their half pressing for an equaliser. Our best chance came with 5 minutes left when substitute Colin Bester's excellent cross was met on the volley by Steve Cokell only for Wormley's keeper to pull off a spectacular save. We were very disappointed to lose 1-0 and felt we deserved at least a draw but we need to start scoring some goals.