

Sunday 16th April 2006 (Easter Day)

Mercury Waltham Sunday League Division One Match at Wormley Rovers F.C. (Main Pitch)

WORMLEY ROVERS	4	EDMONTON ROVERS	0	HT 3-0
<i>O'Selle (37 mins.), Nicholls (43 mins.), Gibson (Pen.) (45 mins.), R.Ackerman (59 mins.)</i>				

WORMLEY ROVERS' LINE-UP: Chris DENT (GK); Kevin HUNT, Paul BUSHNELL, Jamie DIX, Matt WRIGHT; Robert STEVENSON, Alex SANSFORD, Duanne GIBSON, Liam ACKERMAN; Raphael O' SELLE, Gareth NICHOLLS **Subs.:** Ryan ACKERMAN, Matt LODGE, Simon DENT

EDMONTON ROVERS LINE-UP (with Marks out of 10): Ozel OZERMAN (GK) (6½); Colin BESTER (6½), Andrew WARMERDAM (6), Paul WOOLSTON (6½), Terry MOORE (6); Kris SPYROU (6), JUNEKA JUNIOR (6½), Stuart DORWARD (6½), Peter MURPHY (6½); Foyso! AHMED (6), Steve COKELL (6½)
Subs.: Tem ADIL (6), Darryl JOHNSON (6)

Referee: Steve MURLESS

Weather Conditions: Cloudy but mild

Attendance: 23



Factual Report (by Laurence Hughes): We agreed to play this, **our final League match of the season**, on Easter Day as only one player (Nick Vertigans) had initially declared himself unavailable due to other commitments over the holiday period, while it was convenient for me personally as I rarely get any bookings to film Cup Finals over Easter and could therefore commit myself to filming this game instead. Although opponents Wormley Rovers were in the middle of a good run of form and had beaten Champions-elect I.M.L. Red Cow in one of their recent matches, we had no reason to believe that we could not give them a good close game...until the inevitable happened and key players Paul Ellerker (Family commitments ?), Derek Dorward (Bad Back) and Chris 'Nugget' Beeden (Pissed) dropped out more-or-less on the morning of the match ! With Conor McGovern and Tony Speller both out for the rest of the season with injuries (and being abroad anyway), we were forcibly missing five of the starting line-up we fielded back in October when we beat Wormley 3-0, while Darryl Johnson was only named as a substitute due to the encouraging form of 17-year-old goalkeeper Ozel Ozerman. That meant six of the starting line-up were different and it became seven after just **10 seconds** ! when another vital player in defender Terry Moore suffered a back injury with his first kick of the ball and had to be substituted straight away...or at least three

minutes later once the ball had gone out of play. (See picture right !)



With another 17-year-old in Tem Adil coming on as Terry's replacement, it meant we were fielding yet another 'mish-mash' of a side for virtually the full 90 minutes, most of whom were extremely unfit due to a lack of recent match practice, whereas Wormley, like our opponents in our last match, I.M.L. Red Cow, had been playing twice a week due to their success in Cup competitions this season. Wormley did have their own problems before this game though, as they were missing a couple of key players in forward Dave Bell and broken leg victim Stuart Gibson, while two other players had been in a serious car crash the night before and ended

up in hospital, one apparently with a broken neck, although that was wisely kept quiet from their team-mates until after the game.

Nevertheless, Wormley still fielded a strong side including three substitutes and with most of their players currently playing in Senior Saturday football, and it was one of those, forward Raphael O'Selle, who was really sharp in the first five minutes or so during which time he could have scored at least a couple. We also had a lucky escape in the 12th minute when Robert Stevenson had a goal disallowed for offside after running through on his own, Referee Murless blowing his whistle too hastily after Manager-Linesman Trevor Hughes had flagged because Stevenson was initially trying to play the offside O'Selle in on goal before realising that and therefore deciding to run onto his own through ball. Needless to say, Trev got a 'bollocking' from their players (and the Referee ?), but once again it was the law-makers fault, and on seeing things like that, it was no wonder our normal 'substitute/linesman' Ritchie Copues decided to go away for the weekend and Mark Howley decided to go and live up in Braintree !?

After that though, we sorted ourselves out defensively, even though we had been forced by Terry Moore's early departure to put left-sided midfielder Peter Murphy in an unfamiliar left-back role and play the right-footed Kris Spyrou on the left of midfield...where he looked rather uncomfortable against this sort of opposition. In fact we even started creating some good chances on the break with Juneka Junior playing some good through balls and Stuart Dorward, Foyso! Ahmed and Steve Cokell all combining well with some good movement...Cokell (our regular centre-forward) being really unlucky not to score his first goal for 15 matches !!! on a couple of occasions due to keeper Chris Dent making excellent saves.

Indeed right up until the 37th minute it was quite a close game with not much between the two sides, but then Wormley's Duanne Gibson chipped over a perfect cross to the far post for Raphael O'Selle to head in unchallenged due to our players pushing out for offside too quickly following a corner before the ball had been properly cleared.

Unfortunately though we really crumbled after that, and we found ourselves 2-0 down just six minutes later when forward Gareth Nicholls finished expertly with a first-time shot from close range from a right-wing cross after 'becoming active in the second phase' as we tried to play him offside initially following a mistake by Peter Murphy. It then got worse right on the Half-Time whistle when Juneka Junior brought down Nicholls just inside the area with a rash challenge for an obvious penalty which the vastly experienced Duanne Gibson despatched into the bottom corner, sending Ozel Ozerman the wrong way.

We therefore came off at Half-Time losing 3-0 when we didn't really deserve that, and a lot of heads were down as we realised we just didn't have a strong enough side out to come back from that.

Thankfully, Wormley didn't really capitalise on that in the Second Half and they only managed one more goal (in the 59th minute) when substitute Ryan Ackerman ran round the back of a square defence onto a precisely-driven long ball to lob Ozel, who by then was suffering from a thigh strain and unable to jump higher than 5 foot 6 (as he is 5 foot 4). Fortunately we had our normal first-choice keeper Darryl Johnson as our one remaining substitute to come on and replace 'Oz', Darryl having been out for several months because of injury (and 'er indoors' ?). Understandably though, he did do the occasional fumble, while he rode his luck on a couple of occasions when

Wormley wasted chances to increase their lead by lobbing close-range efforts over the bar, but more worryingly for us was the fact that we hardly created anything ourselves in the Second Half apart from a header straight at keeper Dent by Stuart Dorward and in general everybody just went through the motions.

Not that it mattered too much as we knew before the match that The Wheatsheaf were likely to finish second from bottom whatever the result of this game, while they had also announced during the week that they would be withdrawing from the League for next season anyway due to a lack of players, therefore ensuring our Division One survival. The Wheatsheaf had actually asked if their seven remaining players could join **us** for next season, but they have now apparently changed their minds and are going to join Wormley instead...a decision that was made even *before* the start of this match.

Not that a *lack* of players has been our problem this season, but more a lack of teamwork due to constant injuries and family commitments, while in this particular match we had too many of our youngsters all playing at the same time and our older players making a spectacle of themselves...quite literally, as most of them were just putting their glasses back on when I went in the changing rooms after the match !

'Murf's Alternative Report !!: The Jades travelled to Church Lane, the home of Wormley's Rovers, for the final game of a season where the football has often promised more than the results achieved. Having been largely inactive over the last month, a midweek defeat against I.M.L Red Cow excepting, Rovers were perhaps not in the best shape and the list of absentees added to the torpor. Out were Messrs McGovern, Speller, Dorward, D., Ellerker & Vertigans. The latter two in particular impacted the midfield and this department nor the defensive one were further aided when Terry Moore pulled up lame after three minutes. Rovers dependable left back aggravated his lumbago sending your scribe, who Cameraman Hughes had eagerly signed on for another season despite recently not selecting him in his Rovers Dream Team, into the back four. To complete the re-adjustment Kris Spyrou moved from right to left midfield and Tem Adil took the field despite taking some convincing.

Rovers understandably took a while to settle during which time Wormley's lively front pairing attempted to profit. Indeed, in the 12th minute the home side would have taken the lead but for some Keystone Coppery resulting from the new offside law. As Wormley's right winger knocked the ball forward Manager Hughes rightly raised his flag as the home side's centre forward Gareth Nicholls was in an offside position and looked set to receive the ball. But he merely stepped aside allowing his team-mate to gallop onto his own through ball. Fortunately for Rovers, the referee had already put his Acme Thunderer to his lips and blown like a good 'un. The result was an unjustly disallowed goal though Rovers had played to the whistle and stopped to a man in pursuit of the "scorer". There then followed a period of face saving consultation between referee and assistant before the free kick was given and the Wormley protestation laughed off.

The game then settled with both sides having their fair share of possession though, by the break, Rovers were three down despite having 3 clear cut chances of their own - two Cokell one on ones were well saved by the home 'keeper while skipper Stuart Dorward contrived to drag his opportunity wide of the far post. At the other end, Wormley had not been so profligate. In the 37th minute they profited from a far post cross and then in the 43rd from confusion created by their constant exploitation of the new offside law. Home forward Raphael O'Selle in particular often took up a starting position some 2 yards behind Rovers' defensive line before drifting back onside. However, for the second goal it was his strike partner Nicholls who was in an offside position in the first phase but, as he did not touch the ball until applying the finishing touch during the second phase, he was deemed inactive. This, most agree, is where the rule breaks down for Nicholls was only able to get into his position of advantage by steeling a march on his markers during the first phase. Herr Blatter, over to you. The third came courtesy of a cheaply conceded penalty, Nicholls crumpling a la Didier Drogba under an inopportune challenge from Juneke Junior.

The half time vibe was muted. Rovers were understandably disappointed with their performance though Manager Hughes encouraged that there was some decent football being played at times. There had also been chances created so the second half kicked off to a rallying Woolly war cry of "Remember Europa". But the early action was more reminiscent of Davy Crockett's rallying ditty as Wormley pushed Rovers back and, in the 59th minute, goal number four duly arrived. That was enough for 'keeper Ozel Ozerman though it wasn't his back that gave out, more a troublesome quad. He was replaced by Darryl Jackson (*I think Murf means 'Johnson' ! - Ed.*) who hadn't been seen much around these parts since finding love.



The final half hour then petered out into a form of stalemate though the injuries continued to rack up. Wooly's knees gave out, Foysol Ahmed went down with cramp and strike partner Steve Cokell limped around in sympathy. Juneka Junior was also in the wars, though one can never quite tell how seriously he's been pole axed, and even Manager Hughes ended the game hobbling having selected the wrong pair of Asda trainers for the solid underfoot conditions. So the curtain came down on Rovers' season with a game that was a microcosm of the whole shebang. The opposition were not a discernibly superior outfit than Rovers' first eleven but, with so many first choice players missing, The Jades were unable to adjust to a sufficient level. As with the season as a whole, clear chances had been created and spurned. Due to league restructuring, Rovers will retain their place in Division One and, on the general balance of their play, it would have been a travesty had they been relegated. But the squad needs strengthening.