

Sunday 24th January 2010

London F.A. Sunday Intermediate Cup Third Round Match at Wadham Lodge Sports Ground, Walthamstow

EDMONTON ROVERS	2	YAVRUVATAN	4	HT 1-3
McGovern (46, 79 mins.)		Ahoum (25 mins.), Osman (27 mins.), Cokell (Own Goal) (33 mins.), Demir (84 mins.)		

**EDMONTON ROVERS LINE-UP** (with Marks out of 10): Simon JACKSON (GK) (6½); Terry MOORE (7), Alan BARNARD (6½), Martin LOVEDAY (6½); Tony KING (6½), Danny HAGAN (6½), Danny SMITH (6½), Jim ARROWSMITH (6); Stuart DORWARD (6½); Conor MCGOVERN (7), Steve COKELL (6½) Subs.: Daniel DALEY (On for Hagan 23 mins) (6), Vernon NXUMALO (On for Smith 68 mins.) (6½), Kriz SPYROU (On for King 68 mins.) (6½), Darryl JOHNSON (GK) (Not Used)

**YAVRUVATAN'S LINE-UP:** Akpinar UGUR (GK); Yucel ONNY, Ali MENTES, Daldur ISMET, Cetin ALI; Tansel OSMAN, Christian ELOLONGUE, Refet AREL, Umit CIDAN; Ricky ALEXANDER, Steven AHOUM Subs.: Alexander MOUSSINGA (On in Second Half), Zeynel AKBULUT (On in Second Half), Ali DEMIR (On in Second Half)

Referee: Sikiru IDRIS

Weather Conditions: Cloudy

Attendance: 20

**Report (by Laurence Hughes):** No doubt thanks to this match being a 2.00.p.m. kick-off (allowing our players more time to sleep off their hangovers), most of our squad of 15 turned up well before 1.30.p.m. as requested and were raring to go after eight Sundays in a row without a match, but Manager Trevor Hughes then turned up after 1.30.p.m. himself for some reason, resulting in the usual London Cup pre-match chaos.

This time, the players that arrived early had all got changed and run out onto the pitch before Trevor had made a note of their shirt numbers for the teamsheet that had to be given to the Referee 15 minutes before kick-off, a job made even more difficult by skipper Stuart Dorward turning up late after losing his shinpads...he forgot his boots last time !...and both Daniel Daley and Vernon 'Kizza' Nxumalo turning up after the scheduled kick-off time after getting stuck (or lost in Kizza's case) in the predictably heavy traffic at that time on a Sunday...thanks to the proliferation of superstores and gas main repair roadworks in the area.

Daley and Kizza therefore had to get changed by the side of the pitch, so somebody sensibly brought the kit bag out of the changing rooms for them to do that, but everybody 'forgot' about the water bottles cool box, the sack of drill tops, various match balls & the medical kit and left Manager Hughes behind in the changing rooms to carry all that equipment out on his own (along with his own new, bigger, heavier 'Manager's Holdall') once he had finished completing the team-sheet. That resulted in a furious Hughes phoning the cameraman to order players back in to help him, with the words 'no brain cells' being mentioned for all of them, but at least they were having a half-decent warm-up for a change, even though it was still a case of each individual player doing their own thing rather than anything organised...unlike all other teams we face nowadays.

Referee Sikiru Idris wasn't in a rush though, but that was a real concern, as some of our players remembered the last time we played 'Away' to a Turkish team in a London Cup match with a 2.00.p.m. kick-off when it went to Extra-Time and the last 10 minutes of that were played in total darkness...that being a total farce which ended up as one of Steve & Jonty's Soccer A.M. classics. (It was back in the days when we were regularly featured on the cult Sky Sports show).

Our planned 10-minute warm-up therefore turned into a 20-minute one as Mr. Idris strolled out from the changing rooms at two minutes to two and then took a full 10 minutes to do a jewellery check, a boot check, instruct the club linesmen, check/find the match ball and toss up with the Captains, but when we finally got under way at 2.08.p.m., we started almost as well as we did against Nacional De Londres in the previous round as our 3-4-1-2 formation caught our opponents out once again. Unfortunately though, Stuart Dorward missed a great chance to give us the lead after just 55 seconds when he fired straight at keeper Akpinar Ugur (or is it Ugur Akpinar...very confusing some of these Turkish names!) when he was put clean through from Steve Cokell's clever volleyed pass. In fact we had several other reasonable chances in the first 20 minutes as Yavruvatan looked anything but one of the top 5 Sunday teams in London (as their recent record in this competition and the very strong League they play in had suggested beforehand). With us fielding more-or-less a full-strength side with four good substitutes available, at that stage it looked as if we were well capable of producing a shock result, but we then suffered a real blow after 23 minutes when Danny Hagan limped off with a knee injury (that he seemed to suffer getting out of the wrong side of bed in the morning?), and with Rob Brown unable to get to the game in time after a party in Buckinghamshire the night before, it meant a major re-shuffle instead of a straight swap with Daniel Daley coming on to play up front, Steve Cokell dropping back to left midfield, and Jim Arrowsmith having to play in the centre of midfield alongside Danny Smith...a partnership which had not been tried at all before.

All that re-organisation may well have contributed to Yavruvatan taking the lead just two minutes later from their first clear-cut chance of the match as forward Steven Ahoum raced onto a through ball and got in an early low shot from the edge of the area that squeezed past Alan Barnard's challenge and skidded underneath unsuspecting keeper Simon Jackson and into the bottom corner. Not surprisingly, that really fired Yavruvatan up and they then showed the sort of quick, fast attacking football that we expected (or at least I did!) coming in to the game. Right-sided midfielder Tansel Osman went and put them 2-0 up just two minutes later with a quality solo goal that left most of our players standing, and then we found ourselves 3-0 down after 33 minutes as a fierce shot from Umit Cidan rebounded off the post onto Steve Cokell's ample midriff and into the net for a highly fortunate Own Goal.

Despite those three goals in 8 minutes more-or-less killing off the match already, we didn't give up and we forced our way back into the game towards the end of the First Half but missed several good chances, including a far post diving header from Daniel Daley which he sent wide when it was easier to score, and then in the 44th minute Stuart Dorward went and missed a penalty after Conor McGovern had been bundled over from behind, although it did look like a very good save by keeper Akpinar diving full-length to his left rather than a particularly bad miss. However, McGovern did manage to make it 3-1 right on the Half-Time whistle when he blasted the ball into the roof of the net from close range after a weaving run inside the area, but on the balance of play and clear cut-chances created in the First Half, we undoubtedly should have been winning at Half-Time, not losing by a two-goal margin.

As usual in the London Cup, we were finding our opponents' defenders far easier to get past than those we face in Division One in the Waltham Sunday League, although Yavruvatan were definitely a bit more organised at the back than our Second Round opponents Nacional De Londres and they had a much better goalkeeper for a start. Both teams defended well for the first 25 minutes or so of the Second Half though, although Yavruvatan did squander a couple of good chances with wild finishing, while

'Jacko' made a couple of good saves, and up the other end we had a few decent efforts ourselves with McGovern and Daley both testing keeper Akpinar again. Although McGovern pulled another goal back for us in the 79th minute to make it 3-2 after running on to a good through ball from Steve Cokell, we never really looked like equalising and taking the game into Extra-Time, mainly because Danny Smith had also gone off injured by then, leaving us a bit lightweight in the centre of midfield. Yavruvatan substitute Demir Ali/Alì Demir? then killed off the game with an easy finish from close range in the 84th minute, probably as a result of that, the absolute gluepot of a pitch, us having 8 weeks without a game, and players getting stiff after waiting 5 minutes for Referee Idris to spell players' names every time substitutions were made (and for players getting booked...Simon Jackson and Conor McGovern our culprits in that respect).

Although we somewhat predictably went out of the Cup before the Quarter-Final stages again, it was quite an encouraging performance considering the circumstances and the quality of the opposition. It was probably more a case of us playing well and making them look ordinary rather than them being 'over-hyped' as one of the favourites to win the competition (having been losing finalists last year). The main thing that let us down on the day was too many attempted eye-of-the-needle through balls being played (and then easily cut out) when our passing was never going to be that accurate after 8 weeks (or more in some cases) without a match.



### TREVOR HUGHES'S MANAGER'S REPORT

We finally played our much postponed London Cup tie against Yaruvatan on Sunday although we lost our home advantage and had an unusual 2.00 p.m. kick off. However, we did have a strong squad with four substitutes even though we were short of match fitness. Stuart Dorward found himself clean through on goal after just 55 seconds but his shot was saved to deny us an early lead. The game was fairly even but we looked comfortable particularly in midfield until Danny Hagan had to come off with a knee injury after 23 minutes. Two minutes later we went behind to a good shot on the turn from our opponent's first real chance of the game. A brilliant solo goal doubled the lead two minutes later and then a another shot rebounded off the post onto Steve Cokell for an own goal which left us 3-0 down after 33 minutes. At least we have a good record of

*not giving up and a comeback looked on when Conor McGovern was fouled in the area just before half time. However, Stuart Dorward's penalty was saved and it looked as if it was not going to be our day. Conor finally scored in injury time to give us hope going into the second half. Danny Smith also had to come off with an injury but the fact that we had good substitutes meant that we were still creating chances and Conor scored his second after 79 minutes. It was getting dark by now but extra time looked a possibility as we pushed forward but we conceded again with 6 minutes to go. Daniel Daley had our best chance thereafter but was denied by the keeper and despite 6 minutes of injury time we went out of the cup with a 4-2 defeat.*