

Sunday 25th August 2002

Pre-Season Friendly Match at 'Kingsmeads', Hertford East

BBFC	2	EDMONTON ROVERS	8	HT 1-4
Wootten (16 mins.), Wilson (67 (Pen.) mins)		L.Harrison (8, 18, 22, 51, 65, 68 mins.), D.Dorward (24, 85 mins)		

BBFC Line-Up: Graeme WILSON (GK); Huw BROMAGE, Steve FRANCIS, David WOOTTEN, Chris MALE; Simon BARRY, John CRANWELL, James KELLEY, Ian POPE; Simon SCOTT, Dave BROMAGE **Subs.:** Jimmy MUSK, Aydin ALI, Allen AKERS

Edmonton Rovers Line-Up (with Marks out of 10): Russell BEEDEN (GK) (6½); Chidi IBEKWEM (7), Robin PRYKE (7), Lee OSBORN (7), Eric IBEKWEM (7); Steve 'Willie' PLATT (6), Chris 'Nugget' BEEDEN (8½), Derek DORWARD (7½), Jerome HARRISON (6½); Lexton HARRISON (9), George BROMFIELD (7½) **Subs:** None !

Referee: Steve WILDGOOSE

Weather Conditions: Fairly Warm & Sunny

Attendance: 17

Report: With most of our regular starting line-up unavailable due to a combination of Bank Holiday Weekend Family/Social Commitments and the after-effects of skipper Steve Beasley's Wedding the day before, we decided to arrange a Pre-Season Friendly against a team from a lower Division in order to make the game a more even contest. However, although newly-promoted Division Four side BBFC were missing a large number of regulars themselves, we were still really worried when we turned up at the venue to find out that Stuart Dorward had dropped out at the last minute after an all-night drinking session until 6.00 a.m. (Steve Beasley's Wedding Reception didn't go on long enough for him !) while our apparently 'fit-again' Ghanaian midfielder Treasure 'Tex' MacCarthy had blown his chance of a comeback after a three-year absence by doing his usual 'disappearing trick...with his phone numbers cut off' instead of turning up at the Southbury Pub for a lift. That meant we had to give a debut to Lexton Harrison's highly inexperienced 17-year-old ? Cousin Jerome 'Kanu lookalike' Harrison (see picture above right) and also drag the legendary Steve 'Willie' Platt out of retirement (see 'Greats of the Past') for his first start to a match since he 'did his cruciate' eight years ago ! In fact we were so depleted that we also had to play recent signings Chidi & Eric Ibekwem way out of position as full-backs, left-back Lee Osborn as a centre-half and Assistant Secretary and 'retired' outfield player Russell Beeden in goal, while Robin Pryke and Derek Dorward were the only two players remaining from our regular starting line-up of last season !

However, despite all these problems (which included a staggering total of 18 currently registered or prospective players being unavailable...see the list below for the many 'excuses'), we produced yet another amazing performance of similar magnitude to the Hinton Rangers result, although it has to be said that BBFC *were* weaker than we expected...maybe because most of their players were apparently trying to finish off various cans of lager during the process of struggling to put their goalnet up instead of doing a pre-match warm-up on the pitch !

That saw us create numerous chances in the first 10 minutes with the 'woodwork' hit twice amidst several other near misses before Lexton Harrison lobbed keeper Wilson in a one-on-one to put us ahead and do his confidence a power of good after a Pre-Season so far which had seen him squander clear-cut chances galore (especially at 7-a-side) and suffer a lot of criticism from his frustrated team-mates. However, Lexton never looked back after that and when BBFC defender David Wootten equalised with a low shot after a scramble in the area in the 16th minute, he soon put us back in front again just two minutes later with a good finish after using his pace and strength to get on the end of George Bromfield's headed flick-on. His hat-trick was then completed in the 22nd minute with a fierce left-footed 'steel-toecap'-style effort and then Derek Dorward got in on the act two minutes after that with a superbly controlled first-time shot from a right-wing cross to put us 4-1 up. By now though, Steve 'Willie' Platt was already a passenger (as predicted by Laurence Hughes...albeit after 2 minutes, not the 28 that he actually lasted !) and his eventual departure with 17 minutes of the first-half remaining (due to somebody treading on his toe !) saw us down to 10 men for the rest of the match with no substitutes available.

However, BBFC were unable to capitalise on that, despite having three substitutes available themselves and their defensive weaknesses just allowed Lexton Harrison to continue having a field day, going on to score three more in the Second Half with a shot on the turn, another spectacular left-footed screamer and another good lob. Derek Dorward completed the scoring for us in the 85th minute with his second of the match after being set up by the outstanding Chris 'Nugget' Beeden (who will hopefully decide to sign up soon after proving his quality despite not being 100% fit), while BBFC's second goal (merely a consolation) was a bit of a 'joke' penalty taken by keeper Graeme 'Cat' Wilson after a combination of a deliberate reckless challenge by Russell Beeden (so he could have a penalty to save), a deliberate dive by a BBFC forward and a deliberate point to the spot by Referee Wildgoose (for a laugh ?).

However, the day undoubtedly belonged to Lexton Harrison, who (temporarily ?) silenced his doubters with an awesome display in breaking the **Club First-Team Record** for 'Most Goals Scored In A Match (by an individual player)' and despite the poor quality of the opposition he may well have had scouts from Ryman League clubs wanting to sign him up if they had been watching...especially when he took his shirt off at half-time to reveal a six-pack stomach. (Our white players then took their shirts off to reveal a stomach full of six packs of lager, much to the amusement of their watching girlfriends on the touchline...this being an absolute classic for the 'Out-Takes', which I missed because I was changing tapes at the time !!).

For the record, the list of 'excuses' for our players missing this match were as follows: Steve & John Beasley (Having a family meal to celebrate Steve's Wedding the day before), Stuart Dorward (Too pissed from Steve Beasley's Wedding...although he is claiming it was because of a calf injury), Marco Ellerker (Holiday), Paul Ellerker (Holiday), Conor Mc Govern (Attending a Christening), Paul Woolston (Attending a Wedding in Ireland), Steve Cokell (Injured Groin), Tony Speller (Injured Ankle), Gary Odell (Holiday), Paul Rebarro (Attending a Barbecue for his Grandmother's 75th Birthday), Scott Robertson (Social Commitment), Shaun O'Neill (GK) (Social Commitment), Stavros Elia (GK) (On Honeymoon in Australia), Darryl Johnson (GK) (Family Commitments), Treasure 'Tex' MacCarthy (Disappeared...again !), Chidi & Eric's Mate 'Russell' (Holiday), Paul Henwood (a prospective new player who e-mailed us saying that he used to play for Folkestone Invicta in the Dr.Martens League Premier Division) (Gone away for the Bank Holiday Weekend).