

Sunday 23rd March 2003

Mercury Waltham Sunday League Premier Division Match at Hazelwood Sports Ground

EDMONTON ROVERS

3

BROXBOURNE RANGERS

1

HT 1-0

*M.Ellerker (37 mins),
Cokell (54 mins),
Harrison (72 mins)*

A.Reed (Pen.) (71 mins)

Edmonton Rovers Line-Up (with Marks out of 10): Darryl JOHNSON (GK) (7); Chidi IBEKWEM (7), Stuart DORWARD (7½), Paul WOOLSTON (7), Robin PRYKE (7); Derek DORWARD (7), Marco ELLERKER (8), Steve BEASLEY (8), Chris 'Nugget' BEEDEN (7½), Eric IBEKWEM (7½); Steve COKELL (7) **Subs:** Lexton HARRISON (6½), Peter SUTTON (6½)

Broxbourne Rangers Line-Up: Richard NORTON (GK); Stuart RINGE, Danny REED, Danny WALSH; Gary LITTLECHILD, Stuart RINGE, Scott O'DONAGHUE, Andrew REED, Sean GOODWIN; Scott BANKS, Ben NEWMARCH **Subs.:** Steven BANKS, Graham RUDLING, Ben SAXON

Referee: Nishan DEGNARAIN

Weather Conditions: Warm & Sunny

Attendance: 24

Report: Our proud record of not having lost a Home League match at Hazelwood for nearly two years remained intact after yet another excellent team performance, despite Broxbourne Rangers fielding a full-strength and fired-up side after reading that statistic on the [Forum](#) beforehand !?

With Broxbourne Rangers only one point behind us in third place coming into this match, it was always going to be a closely-fought game (as it nearly always is between the two sides) and it wasn't surprising that most of the First Half resulted in both teams canceling each other out with defences on top. In fact with Half-Time approaching it looked as if Steve Beasley's spectacular 45-yard left-footed volley that flew just inches wide was going to end up as the only really decent effort at goal in the First Half until Marco Ellerker gave us the lead in the 37th minute with a fierce drive into the top corner from just inside the area after running onto Steve Cokell's pass. Broxbourne Rangers therefore tried to raise their game for the start of the Second Half, but they couldn't get their passing going at all on the bone-hard pitch and all Darryl Johnson had to deal with was overhit through balls and crosses. In contrast to Broxbourne Rangers though, our players were looking increasingly confident on the ball and we scored an excellent second goal in the 54th minute when Steve Cokell finished off a brilliant sweeping five-man move with a close-range finish...this being partly due to the involvement of sweeper Stuart Dorward, who had decided to go up on his first 'run upfield' of the match. Having gone into a 2-0 lead and looking in complete control at the back, Manager Trevor Hughes then decided to give Steve Cokell a breather in the 69th minute and bring on Lexton Harrison in order to use his pace on the break as Broxbourne Rangers changed their formation from a 3-5-2 to 4-3-3 in an effort to get back into the match. However, it was a mistimed challenge on Rangers forward Andrew 'Biffer' Reed by Chidi Ibekwem just inside the area that allowed them to pull a goal back from the penalty spot with their first on-target shot of the match in the 71st minute, Reed converting the spot kick himself in sending Darryl Johnson the wrong way. Fortunately though, we managed to restore our two-goal margin just 40 seconds later when Lexton Harrison made it 3-1 after 'out-muscling' Rangers keeper Richard Norton to a loose ball and then aiming a powerful shot towards the top corner which trickled along the ground through about four pairs of legs into the opposite bottom corner !? (O.K., maybe I'm exaggerating, but there were plenty of our players and supporters laughing about the finish at the time). We then had a few other reasonable chances after that, but then so did Broxbourne Rangers as the game went on...in particular a bad miss by substitute Graham Rudling (sliced wide) and another effort from 'Biffer' Reed which forced Darryl Johnson into his only difficult save of the match low down at the foot of his post. However, in general we were really solid defensively with Steve Beasley outstanding in the midfield holding role in place of the unavailable Paul Ellerker, while the likes of other 'first-choice' players in Tony Speller, John Beasley & Conor Mc Govern were not missed either, such is the confidence our whole squad are showing at the moment.

Having lost crucial games to Broxbourne Rangers in the past when both sides have been challenging for a Title, it made a nice change to buck the trend this time. Bring on the Percival !