

Sunday 13th April 2003

Mercury Waltham Sunday League Premier Division Match at Enfield Playing Fields (Pitch 17)

ENFIELD RANGERS OLD BOYS	0	EDMONTON ROVERS	3	HT 0-3
		D.Dorward (29 mins.), Woolston (37 mins.), C.Beeden (42 mins.)		

Enfield Rangers Old Boys Line-Up Peter CORDWELL (GK); Derek KELLY, Craig STEVENS, Dean STUBER, Dylan Mc,DONAGH; Dave TOWNSEND Jnr., Javan SMITH, Gavin BIGNALL, Paul CANAVAN; Mark FLOOD, Andy LEADBITTER **Subs.:** Jackson GASH, 'Dan', A.N. Other

Edmonton Rovers Line-Up (with Marks out of 10): Darryl JOHNSON (GK) (7); Robin PRYKE (8), Tony SPELLER (7½), Paul WOOLSTON (8), Steve BEASLEY (7½); Chidi IBEKWEM (7), Chris 'Nugget' BEEDEN (7½), Paul ELLERKER (7), Derek DORWARD (7), Eric IBEKWEM (7); Steve COKELL (7) **Sub.:** Lexton HARRISON (6)

Referee: Richard POPE

Weather Conditions: Sunny & Dry

Attendance: 21

Report: Once again we produced another excellent performance to gain the three points against the odds as everything *before* the match pointed to a likely second defeat in a row. That pessimism was due to Marco Ellerker pulling out on the morning of the match with a niggling knee injury, while Stuart Dorward had announced during the week that he would miss the rest of the season with the ankle injury he received against Hinton Rangers the week before and would therefore be joining Conor Mc,Govern, John Beasley & George Bromfield as permanent absentees. With Peter Sutton also missing due to work commitments abroad and Paul Rebauro and Lee Osborn declining the offer to be named as substitutes (due to excess alcohol ?), we were down to just 12 players again and were therefore grateful that Paul Woolston, Steve Cokell, Paul Ellerker and Chidi & Eric Ibekwem were all able to return after missing the Hinton Rangers match. With Enfield Rangers Old Boys having now sorted themselves out with some signings from the now-defunct Royal Blues since they turned up with 10 men (including three 'over-50's) against us back in February though, we knew we would be in for a tough match and they soon started showing the increased competitiveness that had seen them lose only once in their previous four matches (and that by a narrow 2-1 margin to second-placed Percival). However, our increasingly successful tactics of defending deep and hitting teams on the break eventually paid dividends in the 29th minute when Steve Cokell ran onto Darryl Johnson's long clearance to cross (or was it a mis-hit shot ?) into the six-yard box where Derek Dorward was on hand to run in unopposed from midfield and beat veteran keeper Peter Cordwell with a superbly-controlled first-time finish...at 'pace' !?

That goal really gave us confidence and we then made it 2-0 in the 37th minute when keeper Cordwell failed to hold Steve Cokell's free-kick and defender Paul Woolston was on hand for an easy tap-in which was very similar to the only other goal he has notched so far this season (in the London Cup against Aris).

Just a minute later though, we had our only 'setback' of the First Half when Steve Cokell became only our third player to be shown a yellow card all season when he was rather harshly penalised for failing to retreat 10 yards from a free-kick quickly enough, but we soon shrugged that off to go 3-0 up just before Half-Time when Chris 'Nugget' Beeden finished off an excellent move with a cool sidefooted finish from 12 yards. Maybe that scoreline flattered us a bit as we went off at the break, as Enfield Rangers Old Boys' experienced forwards had been causing our defence quite a few problems with some clever movement. However, Manager Trevor Hughes sorted it all out in no uncertain terms during his Half-Time team talk and again we looked really solid at the back in the Second Half as we ended up stretching our impressive defensive record to just one goal conceded in our last four Premier Division matches...and that being a penalty ! In fact we really should have won by an even bigger margin as we missed three or four clear-cut chances on the break during the Second Half with Steve Cokell and Chris 'Nugget' Beeden being the biggest culprits. However, the three points from this match virtually guaranteed us a Top Three finish in our first season in the Premier Division and on our current League form, the Runners-Up spot is well within our capabilities.