

**Wednesday 30th April 2003**

Mercury Waltham Sunday League Premier Division Match at Enfield Playing Fields (Pitch 16)

**EDMONTON ROVERS**      **4**      **UPSHIRE COACH & HORSES**      **2**      HT 3-2

*Sutton (23 mins.),  
D.Dorward (30 mins.),  
E.Ibekwem (37 mins.),  
Cokell (64 mins.)*

*Doyle (16 mins.),  
Froom (39 mins.)*

**Edmonton Rovers Line-Up (with Marks out of 10):** Darryl JOHNSON (GK) ( 6½ ); Paul REBAIRO ( 6½ ), Tony SPELLER ( 7 ), Robin PRYKE ( 7 ), Steve BEASLEY ( 7 ); Derek DORWARD ( 7 ), Peter SUTTON ( 7½ ), Paul ELLERKER ( 7 ), Chris 'Nugget' BEEDEN ( 7½ ), Eric IBEKWEM ( 7 ); Steve COKELL ( 7 ) **Subs:** John BEASLEY ( 7 ), Lexton HARRISON ( 6 )

**Upshire Coach & Horses Line-Up:** Danny PIPER (GK); Greg HARRIS, Alan FOXWELL, Barry ROONEY, Alan BREWER; Lou PARRY, Mark LAWS, Alex HOTTENPOW, Darren SKEET; Ged DOYLE, Darren FROOM **Sub.:** ?

**Referee:** Denis COVENTRY

**Weather Conditions:** Heavy Rain in 1st Half, Sun in 2nd Half

**Attendance:** 16

**Report:** We finally managed our first-ever win against Upshire Coach & Horses at our eighth attempt despite being without key players such as Conor McGovern, Stuart Dorward & Chidi Ibekwem (all injured), Marco Ellerker (Family Commitments) and Paul Woolston (Illness), not to mention about five other registered players who normally would have filled in. Thankfully though, because this was an evening match our mid-table opponents also had some of their better players missing, in particular the likes of Paul Mitchell, Steve Keys & Gavin Peck, so that evened things up enough to result in a closely-fought match in which we came out on top thanks to some excellent finishing.

This was our first midweek fixture since April 1999 when we lost 3-2 to Rosemill in a Division Two match at Grundy Park, a game in which Derek Dorward was harshly sent off by the same Referee (Denis Coventry) for a 'back-handed slap against an opponent's chest in a tussle for the ball', so that could have been a bad omen and indeed we looked really sluggish in the first 20 minutes or so as a number of our players seemed to be suffering from a hard day at work...or in Paul Ellerker's case tiredness from getting back from an afternoon meeting in Wolverhampton just in time for the kick-off. However, the main reason we found ourselves going a goal behind after just 16 minutes was a torrential rainstorm driven by a gale-force wind which was blowing straight into our defenders' faces and that resulted in both Steve Beasley and Robin Pryke missing the ball completely with half-hearted challenges/mis-kicks which allowed Upshire midfielder Lou Parry to plough straight through the middle on a quick break out of defence and eventually set up Ged Doyle for a first-time low shot that whizzed past Darryl Johnson, who along with sweeper Tony Speller, was left badly outnumbered at the back...this being our first really bad defensive mistake since Lee Osborn was caught in possession in the last minute to gift Broxbourne Rangers a 2-1 win way back in January (Our last League defeat !).

Despite the atrocious conditions though, we managed to put together an excellent move to equalise just seven minutes later with our first real clear-cut chance of the match as Derek Dorward, Paul Rebaïro and Chris 'Nugget' Beeden combined to set up Peter Sutton, who blasted in his first goal for the club with a cross-shot from just inside the area. (See our [Video Clip Of The Week](#)). That saw us have a really good spell of pressure as the weather gradually started to improve and Steve Cokell had a shot well-saved by keeper Danny Piper from point-blank range, while Peter Sutton had a shot cleared off the line by defender Alan Foxwell after a brilliant solo run past four players before Derek Dorward put us 2-1 up in the 30th minute with a good finish in a one-on-one with keeper Piper after pouncing on an under-hit back-pass from Barry Rooney. We then increased our lead seven minutes later when keeper Piper made another good point-blank save from Chris 'Nugget' Beeden's near-post header from Steve Cokell's corner, but Eric Ibekwem was on hand to volley in the rebound from close range. However, we then spoilt all our good work by letting in a silly goal almost right on the Half-Time whistle (in the 39th minute due to it being a 40-minute each way match) as Darryl Johnson seemed to get too over-confident as a result of his recent excellent form in keeping five clean sheets in his last nine matches and therefore tried to catch Alan Brewer's long-range lob/mis-hit through ball ? right under his crossbar instead of calmly tipping it over, the result being an easy headed goal for forward Darren Froom as a result of Johnson having to palm the ball down at the last moment when he realised he would have fallen backwards over the line with it otherwise...Froom actually ending up being inadvertently punched in the face for his braveness as Johnson desperately tried to get to the rebound first.

Because we were now only one goal in front instead of two, we therefore had to make a change at Half-Time as stand-in right-back Paul Rebaïro's lack of recent match practice at this level had actually allowed Upshire's Ged Doyle in particular to create a number of reasonable chances during the First Half (which were invariably fired wide from reasonable positions), so John Beasley was brought on as a defender again having turned up late due to work commitments and that was to see us return to our more recent solid 'boring' form for the rest of the match after the most open and entertaining half of football since we let in six in the Second Half against Rangers back in January ! That resulted in Upshire having only two shots in the Second Half, while we ourselves only had three...with one of them being converted by Steve Cokell after running onto Peter Sutton's volleyed through ball and rounding keeper Piper in the 64th minute to give us a 4-2 victory and an excellent chance of finishing Premier Division Runners-Up with just one game remaining.