

Sunday 8th September 2002

Mercury Waltham Sunday League Premier Division Match at Larsens Recreation Ground, Waltham Abbey

UPSHIRE COACH & HORSES	4	EDMONTON ROVERS	0	HT 3-0
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David (4 mins.),
Doyle (38, 42 mins.),
Mitchell (88 mins)

Upshire Coach & Horses Line-Up: Danny PIPER (GK); Greg HARRIS, Steve KEYS, Alan BREWER; Darren SKEET, Neil GLESSON, Barry ROONEY, Paul MITCHELL, Lou PARRY; Trevor DAVID, Ged DOYLE **Subs.:** Alex HOTTENPOW, Richard DOUGLAS

Edmonton Rovers Line-Up (with Marks out of 10): Stavros ELIA (GK) (5); Robin PRYKE (7), Paul WOOLSTON (7), Stuart DORWARD (6½), Lee OSBORN (6½); Chidi IBEKWEM (6½), Paul ELLERKER (6½), Marco ELLERKER (6½), Chris 'Nugget' BEEDEN (6½) Eric IBEKWEM (6½); Derek DORWARD (6½) **Subs:** George BROMFIELD (6½), Lexton HARRISON (6), John BEASLEY (6½)

Referee: Adam SMITH

Weather Conditions: Mainly Cloudy

Attendance: 25

Report: At the League A.G.M. back in May, Upshire Coach & Horses' Scottish Manager/Secretary Joe Edwards stood up during a debate regarding the League Constitution to recommend our promotion to the Premier Division for this season. After *this* particular result, that was obviously a very wise decision on his part as we gifted them three easy points as Manager Trevor Hughes's tactics to cope with the absence of five first-choice players backfired rather embarrassingly.

One of those missing players was recently re-signed goalkeeper Shaun O'Neill, who decided to rest a niggling knee injury that he'd been suffering from whilst playing for Bishop's Stortford Reserves recently. That meant our first-choice keeper from last season, Stavros Elia, was able to come into the side 'unchallenged', despite missing the whole of Pre-Season after spending it on Honeymoon in Australia and his lack of match practice showed when Upshire Coach & Horses took the lead after just four minutes as he failed to deal with Darren Skeet's wickedly inswinging corner (*see picture above right*), leaving forward Trevor David with a simple tap-in on the line.

Although he has let in worse goals in his Rovers career, that incident unfortunately saw Stavros's head go down and he suffered a lack of confidence after that and was lucky to escape on two or three occasions in the First Half after various bad fumbles, wrong calls to his defenders or dodgy positioning. However, Stavros did make an excellent save in the 38th minute (his only one of the match!?) from a one-on-one after a horrendous mis-kick in defence by stand-in sweeper & skipper Stuart Dorward, but because Stavros's team-mates all expected him to let it in they'd all stopped bothering to chase back to clear any rebound, leaving Upshire Coach & Horses' hard-working forward Ged Doyle totally unchallenged to make it 2-0 with a good finish. In fact Doyle then went and scored his second and Upshire's third just four minutes later when he embarrassingly outjumped Stavros to head in a long high cross, although the 3-0 Half-Time scoreline did flatter Upshire as they'd not had a massive amount of chances that warranted such a big lead and in general we had defended well but been punished severely for any mistakes. The most worrying aspect of our performance in the First Half was that we had not managed a single shot on target as the experiment of playing Derek Dorward as a lone striker in the absence of both Steve Cokell (Injured) and Conor McGovern (Working) had failed to pay off because none of our five midfield players had the awareness (or the fitness?) to get up and support him. Manager Trevor Hughes though, for some reason, decided not to change anything until 17 minutes into the Second Half when forwards Lexton Harrison & George Bromfield came on for Chris 'Nugget' Beeden (who had a Social Commitment to go to) and the irate and frustrated Derek Dorward. In fact 'Del' became even more so in watching from the touchline as, partly thanks to Stuart Dorward abandoning his sweeper's role and pushing forward more often, we suddenly started creating numerous chances at last only for Lexton Harrison (mainly) to start missing them with some feeble attempts in front of goal which were in stark contrast to his last performance when he broke the club goalscoring record!

It was therefore rather inevitable that Upshire Coach & Horses would then go and score another goal on the break as Paul Mitchell rounded things off in the 88th minute with a long-range low shot which seemed to go through Stavros Elia's hands far too easily before the ball ended up in the bottom corner for a 4-0 final scoreline and a disastrous Premier Division debut for us.