

Match Report – Sunday 6th March
Boys Under 18 National Plate Quarter Final
Worcester 0 Woking 2

An early goal by Sam Camsey and a second half penalty from Chris Way, eventually proved enough to ease past a resilient Worcester team and through to the finals at Bowden Hockey Club, Manchester.

To misquote a famous Beatles song, “The long and winding road led all the way to Worcester”. An epic five hour round trip, whichever route was chosen, was but a dim memory, following a bright and controlled display from the young Woking side.

Andrew Mole was the first to fire in an opening shot within the minute. Sam Camsey then won the first of eleven short corners for the away team, however the routine was broken down by a fast defence, only for Chris Way to win a second corner. Again Woking failed to put this to effective use and Worcester scrambled the ball away again. Within seconds Woking were back in force, Sam Camsey tucking away the opener following good work from Chris Way. When Mike Stone won a third short corner within the opening ten minutes, following constant pressure from the blues, it seemed only a matter of time before the game was put beyond the reach of the Midlands team. However, despite holding much of the possession, a failure to convert in the last third of the pitch and on meeting yet another goalkeeper on top form, which kept the score line down.

Worcester had lost two players through injury prior to the match and their situation was not helped by Tom Neal falling awkwardly and severely damaging his knee. Worcester had to employ their substitute within twenty minutes, while Woking were able to rotate their squad throughout the tie. Worcester were trying to break the Woking stranglehold and would have done so successfully twice during the half, except for excellent interceptions from Will Farrer. Woking’s problem was that with enjoying so much possession deep in the opposition half, they risked losing their shape, however, Farrer along with Matt Powell, Fergus Imrie and Sam Parker, marshalled the ball away safely on a number of occasions. Half time came with all the forwards and midfield players having a number of opportunities to increase the lead, but falling short of the final touch.

The second half started in much the same way as the first. Chris Way enjoyed a number of brilliant runs, who along with Moley and Tom Leggett, rode a number of stern tests in the final third. Worcester were unlucky to suffer further injury problems and this meant that Tom Neal had to bravely return to the match, despite being completely immobile, he managed to engage a defender by taking the Centre Forward spot. The Worcester keeper Tom Baldwin, made a further series of successive saves to keep his sides chances alive, meanwhile the Woking keeper Patrick Haddad, was to complete the match without once making a save, such was the Woking dominance.

Despite this Woking suffered a scare, when a shot from outside the area was turned into the net. Worcester's celebrations were cut short, when the Umpire signalled a long corner, as the attack had failed to convert the chance. The ball being turned into the Woking net by Will Farrer and not a Worcester player. It was becoming evident that despite the amount of possession Woking had enjoyed the game was far from settled.

Further Woking short corners went unrewarded. Worcester meanwhile were counter attacking with effective arial lobs from the back and although they lacked final penetration, they were getting more and more into the game. A reverse shot from Mike Stone sailed high over the bar. Jack Thorpe, Tim Downes and Sam Camsey were a handful all afternoon and it was Sam who earned the penalty that put the game beyond doubt. He picked up the ball mid penalty area and while trying to control his shot the keeper went through Sam from behind. Chris Way calmed nerves with a clinical despatch.

The team then ran the clock down to enjoy a hard earned victory. Worcester were a tough opposition who got everyone back behind the ball, defending very effectively.

Finally, we adjourned to 'The Wheatsheaf' and enjoyed a superb lasagne, pasta, chips and peas provided by the hospitable Worcester Hockey Club. It was noted that none of the team had actually bothered to put any peas on their plates, leaving the green stuff to their parents. We finally enjoyed an after match chat with our opposition, both sides enjoying the destruction of Manchester United by Liverpool.

'The long and winding road' ironically to Manchester for the finals!!!

Man of the match – Sam ParkerWally of the Week - Andrew Mole.

Writer's Man of the Match – Sam Camsey (twice in the right place at the right time).

Team that got Woking to the finals...Patrick Haddad – Sam Parker – Fergus Imrie – Will Farrer – Matt Powell – Jack Thorpe – Chris Way – Tom Leggett – Andrew Mole – Mike Stone – Sam Camsey – Tim Downes

Team Manager – Rik Farrer

Coach – Sam (Mr Calm) Ellis

With special thanks to all the parents who made the long journey.