

## Match Report – Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> November

### Boys Under 16 Mercian League

#### Woking 3 Marlow 4

This morning the boys played Marlow in a Mercian West league match. We expected this to be tough, knowing that Marlow had a number of county and HiPAC representatives. Woking won the toss and in the opening phase of play were able to retain and transfer the ball well. This initially put the opposition on the back foot, but they were able to exploit some passing / defensive errors and scored in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> minute. The boys then settled into a routine and held the midfield area well, putting Marlow under periods of sustained pressure. Despite this we were unable to put the ball into the back of the net, with the Marlow GK making some good saves. Half way through the first half the Marlow coach said that he was surprised that they were 2 goals ahead. While we won a number of short corners, we were not able to convert these into goals. Marlow continued to threaten to increase their lead, but their attacks were generally handled by the midfield and defence. The first half ended: Woking - 0; Marlow: 2.

Marlow then started the second half strongly, scoring two early goals, giving them a commanding lead. The boys were not put off and stayed in the match, Alexi was finally rewarded with a goal from open play in the 19<sup>th</sup> minute of this half, Patrick McGrath then scored Woking's second goal with deflection from a short corner in the 26 minute. Harry Samuels then brought Woking back into contention in the 30 minute with a well struck shot after a series of good passes and runs from the midfielders. While Woking piled on the pressure in the last few minutes, we were unable to score the equaliser so the final result was: Woking - 3; Marlow - 4.

All in all, it was a good game with a high standard of hockey played by both teams, the difference being Marlow had the edge on team work/ passing and follow up to their shots on the GK.

I thought that the main lessons from this match were that we should not look to play the long ball through two layers of the opposition - at this age they can all stop a ball hit at them. We need to develop our play by looking for passes to players who are in the clear so that we retain possession (rule 2). This means stronger movement off the ball by supporting players. While "killer passes" are impressive when they work, we give away possession if they are intercepted.

Thanks to the supporters for cheering the boys on, to Whit for umpiring and to Simon for helping with team management and administration.