

Match Report – Sunday 12th December

Boys Under 18 Wessex League

Woking 7 Yateley 1

Following a few availability issues we had a straight 11 to take on Yateley, I decided to move a few players around this time and started Mark Bourke who is usually our sweeper at left wing which he quickly showed me was a good idea by scoring the first goal, Will Farrer usually a forward took over the role of sweeper and in a slightly unconventional way of sweeping took control of the area in front of our defence preventing the early ball reaching our defenders and distributing back up the pitch, Henry Parker usually a defender had a great game at left mid running back to help when needed and pushing up in the attack with some exceptional pick ups of slightly stray passes that would have got past many a player.

It was a great team performance; from relative new comer to hockey Tony Ewins who had a brilliant game at right back to seasoned campaigner Mike Stone who took full control of the centre midfield. We passed the ball beautifully and displayed some champagne hockey showing that we were more organised than Yateley and generally controlled the game.

It took us 14 minutes for Mark to get our first goal, in to the D, touch, touch, touch and round the keeper, but number two followed within seconds when Tim Downes made the first of his blistering runs down the right wing and laid the ball back to John Humphries, who clinically slotted it away. This was a fine example of players doing what they do best, Tim using his speed to create the opportunity and John demonstrating his positional play to pick up the first of his goals. We continued to pressure Yateley with Matt Powell doing an exception job at right mid moving the ball up to the Yateley D (I can't remember how many times I was asked "who is that number 120?"). Patrick Haddad once again stepping up from U16 to help us out played his usual strong game in goal and pulled off a cracking reaction save just before the 30 minute mark to deny Yateley the chance of a comeback. Just a few seconds later the ball was back up the other end at the feet of Mike Stone who realising there was no direct route in to the D moved it wide to Tim Downs on the right, Tim slotted it straight back to John in the middle who only needed one chance to put it away 3-0. A couple of minutes later Matt had made another great run across top D and with a well executed tomahawk made it 4-0 at half time.

The half time talk consisted of "more of the same please" and a plea for continued concentration and lack of complacency, we needed to keep passing and not trying to run the ball.

However 5 minutes in to the second half Yateley, outnumbered our defence and scored their goal. Joe Cunningham at centre back not wishing this to happen again fought relentlessly, and although there were a few goal mouth scrabbles picked up the pieces and cleared our lines on numerous occasions. Over on the left Harry Burlinson marked his man tightly yet managed to break free himself and start a few progressions up the left side, passing the ball accurately out of defence. Now 10 minutes in to the second half Matt made another run in to attack, passed in to John who in a role reversal laid it off for Tim at top D who flicked it firmly past the keeper.

A hard hit long ball up the middle found John with just one defender and the keeper, he picked it up well, turned and shot but his shot was deflected high over the keeper and was now heading toward the goal at head height, then, within inches of going in, a fast returning Yateley defender picked it out of the air with phenomenal accuracy to make the save. Our final goal once again was a credit to our passing game when Will picked up the ball in defence moved it up to Matt who beat his man and passed it on to Tim on the Wing who once again ran like the wind, laid to back to John who popped it in for his fourth !!

From what I learned later the Yateley team was not full strength, several including the keeper were under 16 and at least one under 14 but they fought hard to stay in the match, never gave up and always pushed forward when they could causing our defence to scabble hard on occasions.

An excellent game with tremendous team work, all 11 worked hard and played well and apart from the odd occasion when we tried to run the ball in the second half we played a solid passing game with some cracking goals. Goals of course can only be scored if the defence and midfield are doing their jobs and on the basis that we got seven and they only got one proves very much that they were. This win puts us nicely back at the top of the Wessex League with 2 wins and a draw, we have return matches with Yateley, Petersfield and Camberley to go.

I am very pleased to report no card !! That's 3 matches in a row card free !!!

4 for John today puts him level "Top Gun" with Mike, Tim Ming and Will Farrer not far behind.

Thank you Chris Burton-Brown for umpiring for us once again.