

Match Report – Sunday 13th February

Boys Under 18 National Plate

Woking 3 Southampton 1

Southampton keeper Toby Rigby made a series of outstanding saves during this match, but especially during the first half, in which Woking produced their finest display of the season so far. Woking Manager Rik Farrer and Coach Sam Ellis had defensive selection problems with Ronak Patel and Fergus Imrie out through injury and both Will Swain and Tim Ming not eligible through age restrictions. An untried combination of Tom Leggett at sweeper (later Mike Stone) behind Jack Thorpe, Ed Brierley and Will Farrer (later Sam Parker), showed there are many permutations to this young team. Indeed Sam Parker slotted in seamlessly during the second half linking up well with the midfield. Whatever the combination from the 13 man squad, constant changes seemed to have little impact on an exciting game.

Andrew Mole created the first chance within a minute. A Moley link with Giles Rozier-Pamplin resulted in Giles striking the crossbar. Harry Samuels then fed Sam Camsey, whose shot went narrowly wide. A quick Southampton break was thwarted by a timely tackle from Will Farrer. Moley then won a short corner from which the keeper made a stunning double save, unfortunately for Toby the second was with the back of his stick. Chris Way despatching the resulting penalty stroke. Within minutes a Tom Leggett pass saw Chris Way find the net again for a 2-0 lead.

Another outstanding save from Toby stopped an almost certain score and with Woking encamped in the Southampton half it seemed inevitable that the home side would further extend their lead. Tim Downes went close, before a full length lunge by Mike Stone stopped a breakthrough by Southampton. From another Moley won short corner, Southampton mounted a quick raid and despite Justus best efforts Matt Wood reduced the deficit. With further attacks from a resurgent Southampton, Woking went into the break with only a narrow 2-1 lead for all their efforts.

The second half was to be a completely different affair, with Southampton coming more and more into the match. A Tom Leggett aerial into the adjoining field caused much amusement to the players and spectators alike. Justus had to be quick to get to a couple of strong Southampton shots, but from the break away Chris Way sent Harry Samuels close. Chris himself then had a shot well saved. Cameron Karin then nearly produced an equaliser with a quick shot across the out rushing Justus, which again went narrowly wide. The turning point came when following a link between Giles and Moley, the later was impeded in the 23 metre box, giving Woking another short corner, but reducing Southampton to 10 men with their Captain receiving the only yellow card of the day. Chris Way then managed to strike the near post, before the ball ran to safety, before shortly after striking the far post in similar fashion.

Southampton however were also pressing hard at this stage and were closing in on the equaliser. They appealed for a penalty when the ball struck Mike Stone on the foot. A short corner was awarded as the ball adjudged to be moving away from goal off Mike's stick. Harry Samuels received a green for not retreating and Woking were beginning to regret their earlier missed chances. A Mike Stone aerial to Moley resulted in another fine save. Toby then made three point blank saves from a series of separate efforts. Finally, a Moley cross was turned in at the far post by an onrushing Tom Leggett for a 3-1 lead and relief all round from the home support. The team then ran the clock down in traditional football style by holding the ball as far as possible into Southampton territory.

It is difficult to see how this team could improve on the first half performance (apart from scoring a couple more goals that is). The writer enjoyed an exciting match on a cold and wet day. The fact that others did not get as full a mention in the report was more down a match packed with incidents, the conditions, i.e. rain running down my neck, teeth chattering etc, rather than the lack of contribution. Indeed special note of performances from Harry Samuels, Ed Brierly, Will Farrer, Jack Thorpe, Sam Camsey, Tim Downes and Sam Parker amongst others. My man of the match award goes this week to the entire team.....a quite outstanding effort gentlemen, Probably the best game I have seen this season and I have watched a lot!

The players vote went to Mike Stone and their Wally vote went to Andrew Mole for stopping the ball without a stick. All the spectators winced!

The draw is out – it's Worcester away for the quarter final. Good Luck all.

Special thanks to Nora Leggett for organising teas and all those that contributed and helped with the setting up. To Rik Farrer (Manager) – Sam Ellis (Coach) and to Chris Burton-Brown for umpiring.