

Match Report – Sunday 14th November

Boys Under 18 National Plate

Woking 3 Reading 2

“I have a dream”.....Well not quite Martin Luther King, however, Coach Andy Pike’s inspirational half-time team talk, raised the phoenix from the ashes and turned a beaten Woking side into winners.

There was little early sign of the dramatic conclusion to this game, with Woking starting strongly. Andrew Mole almost penetrated the Reading defence in the first minute, however was judged to have fouled the last defender in his tackle. Giles Rozier-Pamplin just failed with a brilliant mazy dribble into the ‘D’ and Chris Way had a sharp shot well saved. Woking had a reformed defence with Harry Burlinson at Left Back, Henry Parker at Right Back and with old stagers, Ronak Patel and Tom Leggett giving support in the middle. Tom in particular had an outstanding match, especially in the first half, with strong tackling and good use of the aerial ball, breaking up attacks. Usually a midfield player Tom converted very easily to the role, linking well with Ronak throughout.

Reading were very quick on the break and began penetrating the Woking lines, changing the dynamics of the game and beginning to control the midfield. Woking were pushed further and further back and with Henry Parker unluckily receiving a green card for a perceived back stick tackle, it was evident that Reading were becoming the stronger force. Reading seized a series of short corners from which they opened their account, Amaraj Flora flicking his shot past Justus von Hanisch. Further pressure towards the end of the half resulted in another drag flick at goal, Jason Passmore this time the scorer. Reading reached the break, a comfortable two goals up and worryingly looking to complete a rout in the second half.

Coach Pike’s team talk went along the lines, ‘That was not a bad half, we shouldn’t be 2-0 down but we are, NOW you have to believe you can win, because you are good enough, If anyone is sitting here thinking it’s over and just waiting for the final whistle, I can save you 35 minutes, you can go home now’. He went on to explain how we had to step up and take a risk, after all losing 4-1 would be no different to 2-0, press them in their own half, work hard and pile on the pressure, you can do it. The team responded magnificently and came out completely fired up. Slowly, the possession changed and Reading began to sit back on their lead, counterattacking rather than possessing midfield. Ronak was again called on to make magnificent interceptions, to foil the Reading forwards, but the tide was turning. Mike Stone picked up a green card for a rather robust use of shoulder during this period, however, with Chris Way, Harry Samuels, Ollie Sugg, Andy Mole, Will Farrer and Giles Rozier-Pamplin, rotating the midfield & forward positions, the pressure resulted in a number of short corners. Several good attempts were cleared by the Reading defence, until from the fourth short corner; Mike Stone hammered a shot just inside the far post to reduce the deficit. From another short corner Chris Way dribbled to the line, to see his shot blocked by the keeper, however, Ollie Sugg swept the rebound home. A Reading breakaway resulted in a superb double save by Justus von Hanisch, to deny the visitors.

At 2-2 and with penalties approaching fast, one final short corner was awarded. The final whistle went and the whole team with the exception of the Woking goalkeeper went up. Again the ball was stopped by Ronak for a Mike Stone blast and finally tipped in by Giles Rozier-Pamplin, for an unlikely 3-2 win.

Here's to the next round.....'I have a dream'

Stirling displays from the whole squad, with team votes going to Ronak as man of the match. To that I would add two names – Tom for his outstanding play and partnership with Ronak throughout the game and Mr Andrew Pike for a simply brilliant bit of coaching.

Team thanks to Umpires Chris Burton-Brown and Jamie Pinder. Also thanks to Team Manager Rik Farrer.

Special thanks to Nora Leggett for organising the superb after match teas.