

## Match Report - Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> January

### Boys Under 18 Mercian League

#### Haslemere 4 Woking 6

Another successful day for the Under 18s saw a thoroughly entertaining match end in a 6-4 victory for Woking against Haslemere. This was a real 6 pointer as with the two clubs due to play each other twice in 2 weeks in different competitions (the Mercian league and the Hampshire league), we agreed to play only once and for the result to count towards both competitions.

On paper, Woking had a strong team available but 2 withdrawals late on Saturday and early on Sunday through injury and illness left no time for replacements to be called up and saw us travel with a bare 11 - but at least that saved Andy Pike the task of juggling substitutes. Andy started with an attacking 3-4-3 formation with only 3 at the back and we certainly hit the ground running. We gained early control of the midfield through Tim, Stefan, Garth and Will, and two goals in the first 10 minutes through Tom Leggett and Ben Littlejohns gave early indications of a one sided game. How wrong could we be, with that appearance being quickly turned around as Haslemere were very swift to turn defence into attack, breaking quickly and to great effect, rattling in 3 goals in 10 minutes with well placed shots from the top of the D to leave us 2-3 down at half time.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> half started with a succession of short corners for Woking from the first of which which Stefan hit the post with a drag flick and from the next he scored in similar fashion. By now, the midfield were delivering an endless supply of quality balls to the forward line of Tom, Mike and LJ, and goals were scored at regular intervals with LJ grabbing two more (completing his hat trick) and one for Mike to send us 6-3 up with 15 minutes to go. There followed a final period of pressure from Haslemere but the defence of Fergus, Sam and Steve, and of course Justus in goal, held firm except for one moment of aberration when Fergus picked up the ball conceding a short corner from which Haslemere scored to make the final score 6-4.

All in all, it was a very entertaining match but hard work for the 11. This leaves us in a very good position in the Mercian (South of England) league, 2<sup>nd</sup> in the table and level on points with the leaders with one match to go, and with every prospect of qualifying for the South ¼ finals and play offs.

Thank you to the inspirational Andy Pike for coaching the team to another well deserved victory, and also to Tom Leggett who agreed to play before going to his Surrey training but then afterwards found that he was too tired to go, and to Justus who did go to both.

Thank you to Peter Wilman for the photos - first ones attached and more to follow. And also please keep a look out in the News & Mail this week (possibly next) for the match report and photo.