

Match Report - Sunday 6th December

Boys Under 14 Mercian League: Wimbledon 2 Woking 4

Boys Under 14 Development (Friendly): Woking 2 Maidenhead 1

The boys played two matches on Sunday:

Mercian South v Wimbledon - After a few false starts over the team to play against Wimbledon we eventually assembled 12 willing performers to take on Wimbledon. The sign of our strong squad is that we can run 2 teams at the same time with 10 players missing and still win both matches.

In any season and in any match there are pivotal turning points as mentioned last week the fight back from 2 goals down against Guildford is probably the season's turning point thus far whilst today's match turned on Harrison Hubbard's commitment and intelligent positioning to take a shot off the line when we were leading 2 nil.

Wimbledon had the better of the early exchanges but good defensive work ensured we kept the home side at bay although the Wimbledon forwards should have made more of their 2 or 3 clear chances in the first 5 minutes. As it was we went 2 up with Will Calnan's superb reverse stick strike and James Macdonald's tap in following a great move across the pitch and via the right hand side, involving a number of our players. Wimbledon however were not going to lie down and were a constant threat but some last ditch tackles prevented the bulk of the openings from being converted and with Clemens in inspired form we defended resolutely. The one time Clemens was beaten Harrison cleared off the line following some exceptional work off the ball. Wimbledon deservedly reduced the deficit just before half time when we failed to clear our lines and equalized early in the second with a flowing move ending in a deflected goal. At this point the game could have gone either way but Clemens made 3 outstanding saves to keep us level before Will Calnan smashed home our third and on the final whistle Will Chapman cracked home our 4th.

At certain points we played some sparkling hockey but at times were guilty of trying to play the ball too long to an isolated player and rushing our play instead of building slowly and going sideways or backwards. Thank you to both Edwin and Alex for stepping up from the U12s at the last moment, both playing their part in the victory.

Another good win with every player contributing some excellent hockey during the 50, well, 57 minutes of the game....

Mercian Development v Maidenhead - It was with much excitement that the boys started this match on Sunday - after all how often could you play with four GKs in your team, all on the pitch at the same time? (although I will be the first to admit that I was not sure what to expect standing on the sidelines.) As it turned out all went well, Sam Goss playing left forward made some outstanding runs during the match and showed his versatility as GK and as an outfield player. Patrick Haddad playing outfield in defence showed that he also has a fair turn of speed (and fitness) and put in some solid tackles to snuff out many threatening Maidenhead attacks. Tom Gebhard and Matthew Hough (sharing GK duties; each taking 15 minutes at a time) kept our defenders in place and dealt with most of the Maidenhead shots. Mark Slater, Sam Kelly, Evan Kimber and Bas Hilders as midfielders were able to break down most of the Maidenhead attacks while Lukas Fabricius, Scott Porter and

Callum Ferguson, playing in his first match for us this season, saw off most of the attacks that came past the midfield. Eventually Maidenhead was able to break through late in the first half and score the first goal of the match. After coming back and winning some short corners, Sam Goss was able to put away a rebound from a short corner in the latter stages of the first half. The half time score was Woking - 1; Maidenhead - 1.

In the second half the boys had to absorb a lot of pressure for the first few minutes before they started to reassert themselves and take some control of the midfield. After making a number of threatening runs in both the first and second halves, Matthew Cornwell was able to latch onto a through ball and beat their defence and GK to put Woking ahead. Evan Kimber had an outstanding game in the midfield where Sam Kelly provided useful support. Bas was able to keep their defence on their toes making the occasional threatening run from midfield or from a forward position. Lukas was particularly impressive as he used the jab tackle to make things very difficult for the Maidenhead right half and right wing. For much of the game both sides were evenly matched and the spectators were on knife edge as the match balance swung between each team. The final score was Woking - 2; Maidenhead - 1.

Thanks to Matthew Cornwell and Evan Kimber for playing with us this time.