

Saturday 5th February 2011

Woking 2 – 2 Chichester

Why is it that the weeks seem to get busier and I never get a chance to write the match report before a Thursday? I know some of you are literally hanging on waiting to read this guff (thanks Mum) so I do apologise for the tardiness of this report

Now you know we never like to do things the easy way don't you? Well, this week was no different because after dominating the game for 60 minutes and cruising at 2-0 up we ended up with only a draw and if we're honest, we only have ourselves to blame. Sure, we were probably on the wrong end of a few debatable decisions but we had plenty of chances to put the game to bed and unfortunately, a couple of late defensive howlers cost us three points that were well within our grasp

Guess what I'm going to say about the line up for this week? Yep, it was different. LORD STOCK was still limping around but word has it that he's planning a return for this weekend, probably in the 3's or something! Tim, Chris and Ronak were all available again so Hutch, Will and Mike rejoined the 2's after impressing last weekend. And finally, after training with us over Christmas and for the last few weeks, Hugh decided to return to his spiritual home so we welcomed him back into the squad

When we played Chichester at their place we were 4-0 up at half time and ended up hanging on at the end to close the game out 4-3. I've never really understood the expression "a game of two halves" because last time I checked, every hockey game had two halves. But if I did understand it then that game was a classic, we were awesome in the first half and played like duffers in the second. Weird

The first fifteen minutes of this game were fairly even and if anything, Chichester perhaps shaded the possession without really causing us too many problems. They played a man just behind the centre midfield who sprayed the ball around nicely but once we got on his case he became far less effective and we started to dominate. We should have opened the scoring when Denzil missed a far post sitter that he would usually bury with aplomb and then Lego had a mini brain explosion when he was one on one with their keeper and could only scuff the ball wide to leave Andy rueing the missed opportunity of a far post tap in. To our credit we didn't stop pressing and eventually we were rewarded with a deserved goal and Hugh got his first assist of the season. After a jinking run down the right wing Hugh cut in along the baseline and calmly picked out Chris at the back post. Chris lashed the ball into the empty net and his reaction to the goal was hilarious, just check out the picture in this week's News and Mail if you don't believe me! 1-0 up at half time was a fairly poor return on our possession and Denzil was, quite rightly, very keen to point that out at half time

We started the second half where we had left off in the first, dominating the possession and soon we increased our lead which in hindsight, was perhaps not such a good thing because after that we didn't

seem as hungry as we had before. The goal came after Robbo somehow managed to create space in the Chichester D (he claims it was skill but I think he tripped over his own feet) and rolled the ball onto a defenders foot. I'm not sure if the umpire spotted the foot or not but he didn't blow his whistle so Gramps kept going and passed the ball to Denzil who blasted it past the keeper. 2-0 and at that point there was only one team in it, if it had been a boxing match the umpire would have been thinking about stopping the fight but unfortunately we couldn't find the knockout punch. Chichester didn't see much of the ball and when they did have it we snuffed out most of their attacks without much trouble, we didn't get a lot of luck in and around their D but we also should have been more clinical. To give Chichester credit, they didn't stop trying and their two centre backs in particular had awesome games, they were not that good in the first game and I doubt they will have played that well for a while. As the game drifted into the last ten minutes Chichester were handed a lifeline when we gifted them a goal. A tired defensive 16 was hit straight to their right wing who hit it to the centre forward at the top of the D and he nailed a reverse stick shot that Sam didn't see. Oops. All of a sudden 2-0 up and cruising had become 2-1 up and we looked nervous. Chichester however sensed they could get an unlikely draw and piled on the pressure. With a few minutes left they earned a free hit just outside the 25 that was fired directly into the D to where a Chichester player was waiting on the baseline. How he managed to deflect the ball towards the goal and how it snuck inside the near post I will never know but we should have cut out the initial pass, we should have prevented him making a deflection and we should have stopped the shot going in. Oops x 2. It would be easy to blame the defence for conceding two late goals but in truth we should have been well out of sight before then. Unfortunately we didn't convert our possession into goals and our lack of cutting edge was perhaps best emphasised by the fact that we didn't get a short corner in the entire game. The last few minutes were a bit hairy and our cause wasn't helped when Andy helped himself to a late yellow card for a clumsy tackle but we held on for a draw that was the very least we deserved

At the end we were understandably very disappointed, especially when we found out that Havant and Reigate had both won so we were down to third. But before we start beating ourselves up about it, let's remember that we are the second top scorers, behind Havant who are allowed to use players from their National League squad and we have the best defensive record so we must be doing something right, unfortunately this was just not our day. Also the destiny of the league is still in our hands. OK, this draw has made things slightly more difficult but the simple fact is that if we win all our games then we will win the league

MOM voting was not as close this week, Junior romped it with seven votes and he was so happy to put on the blue jumper for the first time ever that he bought a jug. Unfortunately it was disco pop rather than real mans beer but let's not complain. WOW was a lot closer and thankfully normal business was resumed as Andy and Sam went head to head. In fact they went head to head so closely that it ended up a draw so they settled things in the traditional game of Paper, Scissors, Stone. I'm not sure if Andy was bamboozled by the size of Sam's massive hands (take a look at them, they're huge!) or he's just crap at PSS but he lost, however he did set a good example to the rest of

the squad by actually wearing the metro pink jumper. I think I've mentioned before that I reckon he secretly likes wearing it.....

Off to Winchester this week and they have been on good form lately including a draw with Havant the other week. Obviously we're expecting a tough game but we'll be up for it and will be looking to return to Fortress Goldsworth with three points in the bag