

## **STOTFOLD 3 – 0 RTYFC COLTS**

For the final game of 2016 the Colts travelled to Stotfold this afternoon to take on Stotfold Juniors Gold. Our opponents sat just behind us in the league before the kick off but they had only played four games up until now and lost just one, so their league position of 5th was probably a little false. Never the less, following last weeks win the Colts were in a confident mood and up for the challenge.

As the game got under way it didn't take long for us to realise that this match wasn't going to be easy. The Golds put us under pressure and pinned us in our own half for most of the first twenty minutes but apart from a good diving save from Marcel after just four minutes, the home side couldn't find a way through our feisty defensive lines. Josh, Alfie and Fred were working hard to keep the shape and composure at the back and Jack Thrower was covering a lot of ground to ruin any attacking move the Golds were threatening to make down the right as he made several crucial challenges. As Adam pleaded for calm from the side-lines the boys finally started to settle into the game after about 25 minutes and we enjoyed a really good fifteen-minute spell before half time. Ed had the first scoring opportunity for the Colts but his shot was comfortably saved. Moments later we were unlucky not to have nicked an unlikely 1-0 lead when Harry's long shot was heading goal wards. Jem got a touch on it to help it into the net but unfortunately that touch meant the linesman was able to raise the flag for offside and the goal was ruled out. Stotfold never really looked like they'd sit back and soak up the pressure for too long and just three minutes after our 'goal that never was' came the opening goal of the match. Stotfold moved the ball from one end to the other in a quick move that ended up with a low, hard shot from outside our area from the Golds forward. As the ball travelled goal-wards it appeared to move in the air and travel straight through the arms and legs of our unfortunate keeper. One nil Golds. Just before half time Stotfold were close to doubling their advantage but Marcel kept out a shot with a fine one handed save then he reacted quickly from a close range effort to keep the score line tight at half time.

The beginning of the second half looked equally as ominous as the opening minutes of the match when Stotfold came close within seconds of the restart when a good shot floated just over our own cross bar. Five minutes later, a second goal for the home side looked a sure thing but a miraculous challenge from Fred just yards from our goal line stopped yet another Golds chance. The resulting corner fell to a Stotfold shirt and the player was able to get his effort on target but the Colts busy keeper Marcel was on form again to keep it out. Mid way through the second half Royston Colts managed to compose themselves again and create a few chances of their own. Jem's strong run through the Golds defence enabled him to set up Harry with twenty minutes remaining but his shot was comfortably saved and Harry returned the compliment ten minutes later when he tackled a Golds player in our own half and set off down the wing at pace. His cross was whipped in and Jem came agonisingly close to getting his head on it to equalise but it wasn't to be. We were punished for the few half chances we didn't convert today in a cruel way as we conceded another soft goal just seconds after our scoring opportunity. The decisive third goal just before the end came from a whipped in corner that the Golds striker headed in with a good connection and that was that. Stotfold 3 Colts 0.

So a defeat to end the year but this was no disgrace. Stotfold are a decent, well established Division One side who will no doubt be challenging for a top three spot come the end of the season. As for the Colts, they were unfortunate to come away with a three goal deficit this afternoon. Like Andy pointed out, the boys worked hard today and just need to take this result on the chin and keep working hard.

**Taking the Man of the Match award home to sit by the Xmas tree this week was Jack Thrower who covered a huge amount of ground as usual and put in a commendable amount of work in his new defensive role. The squad is big this year and sometimes the changes made to accommodate all the lads in the Colts set up will work for us, sometimes it will go against us but for this newly formed team to finish 2016 exactly half way up Division One is pretty impressive and something the coaches, players and all of us that support the club should be proud of. Happy Christmas to all, see you pitch side in 2017.**