

LGC EAGLES YELLOW 0-5 ROYSTON TOWN EAGLES

A GAME OF TWO HALVES – and one was so good, the other didn't really matter.

That's not to say Royston played poorly after the break. Not at all.

But the first 35 minutes was the best they had produced in the season and made a decent team look ordinary.

Every player was on it from the kick off. Yes, Letchworth had a couple of early chances and had they taken the lead, things might have been different.

But probably not. Not many teams can live with the Eagles when they bring the commitment to match their ability as they did in difficult conditions on a sticky pitch.

Who says teenagers don't listen to a word their parents say? Cameron King had been told to get his head on a cross as decisively as Fernando Llorente had (twice) for Swansea the previous day.

When Luca Winterton was given enough chance after his initial corner was cleared in the 12th minute, he sent in a fine cross and King was able to divert the ball from slightly behind him and into the corner of the net.

From then on, Royston were dominant and rampant. Winterton made it two six minutes later with a deflected effort and only the Letchworth goalkeeper was standing between his team and a drubbing.

Every part of the Eagles team was in full effect. The three-man defence was strong and composed, Sean Blois and Kyle Smith were running the midfield, Max Coutts and Logan Downie were providing attacking width and Jack Piggott and Kian Harness were making a nuisance of themselves up front.

Harness should probably have had a penalty when shoved in the box but instead of sulking, he recovered the ball within seconds and put the visitors three up with a crisp finish.

The half ended with the perfect reward for the combination of industry and inspiration. Owen Maslen and Piggott combined well down the right and there was Harness again to make the scoreline reflect Royston's superiority.

The second half was always likely to be a different proposition, with Eagles playing up the slight slope on the pitch and a bit into the crosswind.

Royston did come close to adding to their tally but were denied by the home goalkeeper and the frame of the goal.

But for the most part it was a case of holding on to what they had and not giving Letchworth a sniff of a comeback.

It needed calm heads and strong legs, and that was where King, and most of all man of the match Will Hamblin, came in.

Jacob Schroeder had gone off injured just before half time, forcing a change of shape at the back, but the reshuffled defence, also featuring Maslen and George Palmer, made it clear that keeping the clean sheet was a matter of pride.

Time and again, Hamblin in particular made great decisions about when to go for the ball and when he did, he won it and then ensured its next journey was to someone in a white shirt.

Jacob McGlynn's handling was assured when required and the visitors neutralised the hosts' main striker to such an extent that he resorted to petty fouls.

There was no need to add gloss to his own and the team's performance, but Harness did so anyway, completing his hat-trick in stoppage time.

The victory sent Eagles top of the league on goal difference. And Letchworth will not have forgotten this humbling when the teams meet again in the League Cup Final in May.

Team: Jacob McGlynn, Jacob Schroeder, Cameron King, Will Hamblin, Max Coutts, Sean Blois, Kyle Smith, Logan Downie, Luca Winterton, Jack Piggott, Kian Harness, Owen Maslen, George Palmer.

ends