

RTYFC COLTS 3 – 4 RTYFC EAGLES

It seems surreal that half way through January, the new season has only just got under way but on the plus side, it means a lot more football for the boys between now and the end of the season. First up for the Colts today in a condensed but much tougher looking league fixture list was our club mates and probable title favourites, Royston Town Eagles. The previous encounter between these sides ended up in a 4-0 win for Eagles so although there was no shame in that particular defeat, Adam and Andy would have been looking for any improvement on that result to show progress is being made as we head into the depths of Winter.

So with all the boys present in the cold, damp conditions, the game was under way slightly earlier than scheduled. Three minutes into the game Marcel became the unlikeliest of scorers when he had the ball in his hands. His huge kick looked like it could create the first scoring chance as Harry chased it. The ball took one big bounce outside the opposition area, then another just in front of Jacob in the Eagles goal and in it went without any of our forwards needing a touch. In the most unpredictable fashion, the Colts keeper gave us the perfect start. For the first twenty minutes, the Eagles couldn't seem to find a way through the Colts well organised back lines and despite having the majority of the possession, they were not finding an equaliser easy to come by. Logan looked a dangerous threat down the left with his electric pace but Alfie Ricketts was standing him up and closing down the angles brilliantly as attack after attack fizzled out. Josh Cook made a few crucial tackles in the first half to keep our slender lead intact and even when the Eagles finally looked like equalising with fifteen first half minutes remaining, Fred was there to clear Kian's goal bound chip. Eventually, after the Eagles near miss, it took a wonder strike to even the score as our opponents worked themselves into a little bit of space in midfield. An unstoppable long shot was lashed into the top corner and we were all level. In years gone by, this may have been the point where the Colts would fall apart against such strong opposition but in recent months, they've shown more resilience and at worst, have managed to keep the score line respectable. They weren't just settling for respectable today though! Today the Colts were playing with a determination on a level we've probably never seen from this side before. Today was a day the Colts knew they'd need to step up a level or get hammered and that's exactly what they did. Within thirty seconds of the restart we were on the attack again. Harry was able to make enough space for himself in the opposition half with some neat footwork and his perfectly weighted thru ball found Jem who's calm finish put us back in front. By now, the game was looking more like a frantic cup tie with both sides desperately trying to get a stranglehold on the game. The Eagles definitely had the majority of possession as the first half reached it's climax and ten minutes before the break they drew level again when another shot from range found the net. In the last five minutes of the half, Marcel made a great reaction save from a close range shot to keep parity but right on the half time whistle, the Eagles finally took the lead for the first time at a crucial moment. A fizzing low shot was tipped behind by our keeper but the resulting corner lead to a goal that meant we trailed 3-2 at the break.

As the second half got under way, the only fear from the side-lines in the Colts camp was that the constant pressure from a talented Eagles side would be too much for us to deal with as the game went on because on the few occasions we have shipped a few goals, they've usually been scored against us in the latter stages of a match. Stan Foster and his battling midfield cohorts were keeping their shape better than ever this afternoon though and with the back line doing a sterling job, the Eagles were reduced to looking at they're most threatening from set pieces. Just one minute into the second period, a free kick from the right was whipped into our area and met with a header that fortunately floated wide. Still the Eagles bossed possession but still the Colts held strong and it was

only a free kick, again from range, that beat Marcel as Kian's whipped in free kick from the left somehow flew straight in. 4-2 Eagles. Despite having to soak up the pressure as the match went on, the Colts were still in this game and even though the home sides chances were few and far between today, with Ollie, Ed, Harry and Jem bombing forward whenever they could, there was always a chance we'd find a way through. Within a minute of going two goals behind the Colts showed great character as they reduced the deficit within a minute once more. Stan Kitchener played one of his speciality thru balls into the path of Harry Alabaster with ten minutes remaining and he was able to chalk up his twelfth goal in nine league games as he slotted home a trademark one on one finish to put us within one goal of the Eagles. 4-3, game on! In the last few minutes, Sean's effort struck the Colts bar which nearly sealed the result but the Colts also nearly scored as Stan Kitchener's shot was well kept out by Jacob between the Eagle's sticks. Final score - Colts 3 Eagles 4.

At the end of the game Adam summarised proceedings perfectly by pointing out that this was probably the Colts best performance to date. Even though this was a defeat it was a narrow defeat against the best side in the Division One and we even drew the second half which is a huge testament to just how far the Colts have come in recent times. If the boys continue to improve at this rate there is no doubt that they will give anyone in this league a tough game and surely they'll pick up points along the way. Every single Colts player should hold his head up high and be proud of the effort they put in today, a superb effort! Well done also to our friends, the Eagles as yet again this was another derby match played in a great, sporting spirit.

Alfie Ricketts was awarded today's Colts man of the match for his solid defensive performance against a dangerous opposition.