

BSFC UNITED 1 – 1 RTYFC COLTS

After playing two of the leagues strongest teams in the first couple of games since Division One was scaled down in size, facing Bishop's Stortford United today felt like it could be an opportunity to pick up a point or three for the first time since the league was revamped. If past results against United were anything to go by, you probably wouldn't put money on the Colts getting anything from this fixture as they've already beaten us 3-2 and 5-2 league meetings since October but this Colts side are beginning to play with a new level of grit and determination that will make any team who plays against us really have to earn any success they get.

With regular keeper Marcel out injured this week, our luck wasn't looking good before the kick off as the team had to be reshuffled with Alfie Ricketts being sacrificed from defence to slip on the goalie gloves. As the game got under way, the Colts struggled to get their passing game together in the early stages and apart from one decently struck shot from Jem that the home keeper comfortably dealt with, we created very little in the way of scoring opportunities in the first fifteen minutes and it was United who took the lead early on. A well hit shot from range flew over Alfie's head into the roof of the net put us one nil down and the big fear was that despite Alfie being a more than capable ex Colts goalie, would the Stortford attacking players take advantage of his lack of height between the sticks? Well maybe they would have if they'd been given the chance to shoot more but he was well protected by two very hard working midfield and defensive lines this morning and the physical presence we've lacked in the past against United was certainly not missing today. Harry and the home team's central defender were spoken to by the referee midway through the first period as things became a little heated but thankfully this week, the regular Stortford referee who is a mature (shall we say) but likeable character handled any potential flash points sensibly and allowed the game to flow. Stan Foster was also spoken to but amidst the odd verbal warning, the Colts stayed focused and managed to create a couple of half chances. Harry nearly levelled the score when his shot went just over the bar and on the half hour mark, Ollie had a decent shot kept out by United's tall goalie. There was little more goal action to speak of as the half came to an end but this was boiling up into a good little battle and the break was probably a well timed chance for some of the lads to refocus and calm down a bit.

The first chance of the second half came a few minutes after the restart when Ollie's free kick was comfortably kept out. Even more so than the first half, there was very little in the way of goal mouth action and scoring opportunities to report on but as the game continued in a physical manor, it was the Colts who were coming out on top in all areas of the pitch.

Alfie reminded us all how quick he was to fly off his line and command his penalty area and he was looking a very solid replacement goalie. The likes of Jack and Cookie were real rocks towards the back as the tackles needed to be strong to keep United at bay. At the other end the composure from Jem and pace and strength of Hazza always looked like it could cause problems and with twenty minutes to go we finally got a well earned equaliser. A decent kick from the hands of Alfie bounced kindly in the middle of the park and Harry was able to latch onto it, with Hazza in Incredible Hulk mode it would have taken a brick wall to stop him scoring his fourth goal in three games as he burst his way through the central defenders and passed a left footed shot into the bottom corner to equalise. So, with the scores level, that's how it ended. Thankfully, mutual respect was shown all round as the boys from both teams shook hands as they left the pitch which was good to see.

This was a really hard earned and well deserved draw for the Colts today. Every single player involved put in a shift and the coaches gave praise to the whole squad with special mentions to Jack and Cookie for their tackling and defensive abilities, to Jem and Hazza for working tirelessly up front and to Man of the Match Alfie, who despite not playing in goal for the Colts for a long time now, played his part for the team with great confidence.

Well done to all, a fantastic point gained and thoroughly deserved!!!