

## STOTFOLD GOLD 1 – 1 RTYFC COLTS

The Colts faced Stotfold Jnr Golds again this afternoon, after narrowly missing out on a victory against the very same opponents two weeks ago, when the width of our home cross bar denied us all three points in the final moments of the game. With no fewer than five players that started the season absent this week and with Alfie having to pull out prior to kick off with an immobilising foot injury, the signs our luck might change for the better this week certainly weren't evident before the kick off.

As the game got into full flow, it was the Colts who were enjoying the majority of the possession and the first chance of the game came our way after just seven minutes when Ollie's low corner was met by Stan Kitchener who's shot was comfortably saved. Against the run of play, Stotfold took the lead on ten minutes when a very good, long, cross field pass was well controlled by the opposing striker in the Colts penalty and he side footed the ball back across the face of our goal to slot home and make it one nil. Despite the early deficit in the scoreline, it was obvious the under 13 boys we'd drafted in this week to replace our absentees were not going to feel overawed and it was Royston who created the better chances as the half went on. A trademark huge kick from the gloves of Marcel just moments after the goal saw Jem latch onto a loose ball and his shot came agonisingly close to equalising as it struck the post, rebounded across the Golds goal and rolled away to safety. Stand in under 13 player, Jack Green, was looking very composed on the ball and creating some good chances as the Colts looked to get back in the game and his cross on twenty three minutes found Jem who was looking threatening from a wide position this week but his shot didn't find the target. On the half hour mark, a kick from the Colts keeper was well won and controlled by Jesse in the middle of the park and he played a ball forward that Harry took on the run. Harry placed a well struck shot past the Gold's keeper to end his little goal drought and Royston were deservedly back in this match. As the first half came to its conclusion, Jack was involved again as his goal bound shot was deflected away for a corner but the refs whistle bought an end to the half before the kick could be taken.

Unlike the last match against Stotfold when these two teams clearly dominated one half each, this week saw the Colts continue to create the better chances as the match went on. With the younger stand in players, Jack and Ross, performing well, yet another under 13 temporary recruit, Taylor, was introduced midway through the second period and he settled quickly into the pace of the game as he won a header in midfield to set up a half chance for our ever threatening forwards. Taylor nearly got on the scoresheet himself as he tried his luck from a free kick a long way out that went close but slightly too high. Whilst Josh Cook and Fred were dealing with any wide threat at the back, stand in centre back Ross was proving to be a rock in the middle of the defence and the midfield trio of Jesse, Jack and Stan Foster continued to win challenges in the centre of the pitch to create more opportunities for the forwards. Jack Green came agonisingly close to putting us ahead midway through the half when a cracking strike deflected off the top of the Stotfold bar. The Gold's almost took the lead with fifteen minutes remaining as a shot went dangerously close but still the Colts continued to threaten and looked more likely to snatch the win. Jem, playing out wider this week, put in a good cross near the end that captain Stan Foster connected with but the ball took a touch from a Gold's defender and the resulting corner came to nothing. As we went into the last ten minutes, some great work from Ross enabled Harry to find some space and his shot looped over the keeper but struck the top of Stotfold's charmed crossbar and once again, the width of the goal frame looked like being the only thing coming between Royston Colts and a first, hard earned, Winter League One win. Stotfold were putting us under a bit of pressure in the dying moments but still the Colts carved out one last chance at the very end when some good play from Jem allowed Taylor to break down the left. A great run from Taylor and a shot from a tight angle that looked like the home keeper got a hand to went behind but a goal kick was given and that was the last chance the Colts had. Stotfold had one final sortie on the Royston goal but the final shot flew over Marcel's goal in the last few seconds which felt like justice as the final whistle blew, as you felt a point was the very least our boys deserved this weekend.

Andy summarised the afternoons events by thanking the three under 13 lads who stepped in and stepped up to help out brilliantly today. As the coach pointed out, every Colts player who took part in this match could have been given the man of the match award, they all played their part.

**This was another point that is the very least the boys deserved and they can go away with heads held high that they continue to hold their own in what is now a very difficult division.**

**Jem was chosen as today's man of the match for his solid contribution, playing in a wider position than he is used to in the forward line.**