

## **RTYFC COLTS 3 – 1 HITCHIN**

After back to back defeats in Division One, a win against Hitchin Town Youth Pumas this chilly afternoon would be a great moral booster for the team. This team have been bit of a bogey team for the Colts in recent seasons so playing against a slightly stronger Hitchin side than we are used to facing was never going to be a stroll in the park.

For the first fifteen minutes the Pumas probably had the better of the game possession wise and it was our visitors who came closest to opening the scoring after just three minutes when a shot fizzed just wide of Marcel's right post. Ten minutes later the away side had an even better chance to score after a late Colts challenge was penalised and Hitchin were awarded a penalty. Marcel stood tall and made a comfortable save from the spot kick and he kept out the follow up shot with a reaction save from close range to keep the game scoreless. The central defensive pairing of Jack and Alfie were dealing with any attacking threat from Hitchin with some solid tackling and the work rate and pace of our full backs, Cookie and Max Reader, were starting to create chances for the Colts as the first half went on and it was the home team who looked more threatening as they went on the counter attack each time the Pumas moves broke down. With fifteen minutes of the half remaining Max Reader played a lovely through ball to Harry who was able to keep his composure as he placed a low shot across the advancing keeper into the far corner of the net. 1-0 Colts!

Suddenly it was the Royston boys who were looking by far the more threatening as the half came to a close. Jem, Fred and Harry all came close to extending the score before the break but as the half time whistle blew, it remained just one nil to Royston. Not something you feel should concern us but we've lead or been in a strong position mid way through a game a few times lately and things have gone wrong in the second period. Could this week be different? We all hoped so!

Thankfully, the second half was only two minutes old before our nerves were eased somewhat as Jems precision perfect pass to Harry resulted in him netting a second for the Colts but at 2 nil up, this game was far from over. Hitchin Pumas have been around Division One a lot longer than ourselves and they were never going to make this easy for us and at times they played some good passing football to create some nervy moments at the back. They could well have pulled a goal back on fifty minutes when a mix up in the Colts defence lead to a great scoring opportunity but somehow the ball ended up deflecting dangerously close but just wide of our goal. With the game opening up, Royston went on the counter attack again and Harry came close to scoring another when his one on one shot against the Hitchin keeper was brilliantly tipped behind to safety. The resulting corner from Ollie fell perfect for Jem who's strong header was well saved to stop him getting what would have been a much deserved goal. Hitchin continued to press and came close with a headed chance of their own that went wide with twenty minutes remaining but a minute later a skilful move finally broke through our well organised midfield and defensive line and the away side scored to bring them back into the game. At 2-1 up and with just ten minutes remaining this game could have gone either way. The first drawn game in any Division one fixture this season was a possibility now. Hitchin would have hoped they had too much for us and could turn the result around completely but maybe, just maybe, we could hold on or better still, extend our lead and take a well earned three points. Royston looked determined not to throw away the lead this week as they kept coming forward. Jem put in a great cross that Harry only half connected and his shot was parried away. Ewan quickly followed up the keepers save with a shot that also went close but once again the Pumas keeper managed to keep it out. Hitchin looked to surge forward again but in the blink of an eye, they lost possession in midfield and Harry found himself

with a scoring half chance that somehow trundled its way through the arms of the unfortunate away keeper. It wasn't Harry's sweetest strike of the season by a long chalk but he and his team mates didn't care one bit as the Colts extended their lead and Harry celebrated his third hat trick of the season and tenth league goal in five games.

With just seven minutes to go and players, coaches and parents all wanting the final whistle to sound, Hitchin went forward again and Marcel committed himself to coming out of his area to try and defend a one on one situation in which he hoped he'd beat the on rushing striker to the loose ball. With a rare moment of mistiming from the Colts consistent No.1 and the Hitchin striker in an almost certain scoring situation, Jack made a superb covering tackle to thwart the danger. Moments later Jems long range shot came close but was well saved. The final chance of the match fell to the visitors as once again they must have wondered what they could possibly do to beat us today when an almost nailed on opportunity to score was scrambled away by a superb goal line clearance from Alfie Ricketts.

On reflection, this was a fantastic result for the Colts and yet another encouraging sign that this newly formed team are really beginning to work well as a unit. Beating an established Division one side and sitting mid table at this stage of the season is no mean feat. The coaches were full of praise for the boys during the post match talk as they complimented the boys on each and every one of their efforts. Special mentions were given to pretty much everyone, in particular to Jack for his solid tackling performance, to Harry for looking unstoppable as a goal scorer up front, to Fred and Stan who continue to work hard for the team, to Jesse for a great battling display in midfield and to today's man of the match, Jem, whose touch, skill and all round game was top drawer this afternoon.

Next up for the Colts is Ashwell. Another very tough fixture where we could do our friends the Eagles a huge favour if we can get something from that game. On today's performance, you never know!