

## SUN SPORTS 4-2 EAGLES

EAGLES tasted defeat for the first time in the season as their County Cup campaign ended at the last 16 stage.

That was always going to feel like a disappointment after last season's run to the last four.

But they came up against a team who showed in the second half why they were runners up at under 13 level to the Harvesters side which beat Royston in the semis.

It all began so well, though. Or at least it did after the farce of the frozen pitch was resolved by the match kicking off an hour later than scheduled.

Man of the match Jacob Schroeder had been specifically instructed to go forward for the early corners and take advantage of the opponents not knowing just how much he loved heading a ball.

Sun Sports ignored their first warning, but after 20 minutes Schroeder timed his run to the back post to perfection before stooping to head home.

From then on, the home side put one of their biggest, hardest players on Schroeder at every set piece, but the damage had been done.

Unfortunately, another Eagles corner led to the equaliser.

Sun Sports broke quickly and found themselves three on two. Jacob McGlynn saved the first shot well but could do nothing about the follow-up.

Eagles were soon back ahead, though.

Luca Winterton's quick feet earned a penalty which he took himself and just managed to convert, via the goalkeeper's left hand.

In another example of the less-than-impressive set-up of the hosts, it wasn't even clear Winterton had scored because the side netting had not been pinned to the grass.

But he had, and it was a lead Eagles held until half time.

After the break, though, things changed.

It was Sun Sports who were winning most of the second balls and Kian Harness and Jack Piggott were feeding off scraps at the attacking end.

Schroeder was poleaxed by a dangerous aerial challenge from his marker and the feeling that, in senior football, the foul would have attracted at least a yellow card, grew when the same player scored the equaliser out of nothing.

On the one hand, it was a stunning finish which came out of the blue. But it had been coming, with Sun Sports putting a number of efforts off target before finally drawing level.

Soon it was 3-2, when an in swinging free kick from the home sides right found its way all the way into the net.

Eagles had a couple of glimpses of hope on the break, before a penalty, which looked soft from one angle but was deserved according to Royston's linesman, killed the game.

As Kev and Roy reflected afterwards, the difference was Sun Sports' ability to raise their game when they needed to.

Eagles had been playing on pretty much the same level all season and it had been enough to win all their games against the generally weak opposition in the league.

They were in no way inferior technically to Sun Sports. But in terms of finding a new gear and maintaining intensity, they were found wanting on this occasion.

It was a valuable lesson, and a timely one.

Royston can now, as the cliché goes, focus on the league.

If they win it, it would confirm they are good enough to move to a higher standard of competition and play against these kind of teams every week.

TEAM: Jacob McGlynn, Jacob Schroeder, Cameron King, Oscar Youngman, Will Hamblin, Kyle Smith, Sean Blois, Logan Downie, Luca Winterton, Jack Piggott, Kian Harness, Jacob McCormack, Max Coutts.

ends