

Match Report – Dartford v. Chatham Town Kent - Central Division Kent Youth League

Venue: Princes Park Community Pitch **FT 3-0** Weather: Absolutely Chucking it Down!!!

The young Darts went in to this game knowing that a win would take them top, and leave them the only team in the league with a 100% record. The visitors were an unknown quantity as this was their first league game. They have played four cup games this season, winning them all in convincing fashion.

The weather was absolutely atrocious, with rain coming down by the bucket full. However, as the fixture was to be played on the community pitch, it all added to a perfect playing surface where the ball could be moved about with pace and the players technique was tested to the maximum.

I decided to make a few changes to the side that were unlucky to lose at Maidstone in the FA youth cup. This isn't a reflection of any players' performance in the cup game, more really an opportunity, and an excuse to get some players some football. We have a decent sized squad this year with plenty of ability so it may well be the case that a player playing well may still have to make way to keep all the players fit, happy and interested.

In came Jack Walter, Tom Eyers, James Jordan, Ashley Issuree and Lewis Sutherland, for their first competitive starts of the season, in a traditional 4-4-2 formation. It was clear from the outset that whoever was brave enough to get the ball down and play was going to have to do it well for it to be effective in the rainy conditions. Dartford were first to do this and soon got in to their stride and got their familiar passing game going. We had the luxury of a left footed player on the left this week and that gave a little more balance than the last couple of games and in the first half in particular, the overlapping runs by Lewis Sutherland caused the Chatham right hand side plenty of problems. However, for all the football ability in the side, the first goal was straight out of the Wimbledon coaching manual! A huge kick by Adam Molloy in the Dartford Goal saw Callum Nye clean through with only the keeper to beat. Callum calmly & comfortably beat the keeper to put the home side 1 – 0 up.

Home keeper Molloy had already pulled off a good save prior to Dartford taking the lead, but other than back passes and clearances, he didn't have a lot to do for the rest of the half. However, what he did, he did well and his distribution is getting better and better.

With ten minutes to go before the break, Dartford created the move of the match. Some possession in defence saw the ball played in to midfield where, after another spell of keep-ball, the ball ended up at the feet of striker James Jordan who had popped up in the right wing position. James played the ball of the match by hitting a left footed pass in to the path of left-back, Lewis Sutherland. Lewis quickly made his way up the left hand side and put the ball in for Danny Crouch to take over. Crouchy had three attempts that were all dealt with well by the visiting defence but Dan wasn't going to give up and he persevered until his right footed shot across the keeper found the net. This was excellent football and the two goal lead was the least we deserved. We kept knocking at the door but some dogged defending kept us at bay until half-time. H/T Score 2 – 0.

This weeks half-time talk centered around keeping possession in our attacking third. We are so full of good runners that sometimes, we are guilty of getting the ball forward too quickly and that can lead to the ball coming straight back in to a vacant midfield. We were also playing too many straight balls that were being picked up by the keeper and this is just giving the ball away. We have one of the best crossers of the ball in Danny Nash and we were tending to bypass this strength for "Hollywood Passes".

The players were sent out with the thought that the next goal could well be decisive. This proved to be the case when 15 minutes in to the half, Crouchy collected the ball 25 yards from goal. He struck the ball well through a crowded box and the visiting keeper was helpless as he watched the ball fly in to the net. This was his third goal of the season and he is now setting the standard that the other goal scorers have to follow if they want to catch him up in the scoring charts!.

One pleasing note in the second half was the way in which the players altered their passing to bring Nashy more in to the game. I had lost count of how many quality balls went in to the box from Dan, but it took him until the 70th minute to waste a ball! Some of the crosses were of truly great quality but through determined defending and some early season tired legs, we weren't able to capitalize on them-so guess what we will be working on this week in training!

We had our chances to add to the score but we in the end we had to settle for three goals. Also very pleasing was the clean sheet for Adam. We defended well against a Chatham side with some ultra quick forwards. The closest Adam got to conceding was when he was called upon to be brave and come and punch the ball off the head of one of the strikers. This was brave decisive keeping and both the defenders and Adam can be proud of the nil goals conceded.

Team: Adam Molloy, Jack Walter, Lewis Sutherland, Ola Ayoola, Tom Evers, Sean Heather, Danny Nash, Ashley Issuree, Callum Nye, James Jordan, Danny Crouch. Subs: Frazer Bent, Connor Heffernan, Billy Eves and Brett Fairman.

Goal Scorers: Callum Nye & Danny Crouch (2)



MOTM:- Danny Nash

<http://www.dfc18.co.uk/u18team051008/u18team.html>