

Sunday 9th November - OneTwenty2 Challenge Cup
Dartford FC U18s 4 Bromley FC U18s 1
Princes Park Stadium

Due to the heavy rain previous to this match, the game was in doubt until I arrived at the ground. I put on my flippers and snorkel, swam out to the centre circle and then made a beeline to the penalty area to the Grassbanks area of the ground, where I bumped into some Bromley parents who took it upon themselves to try and clear the surface water to ensure the game went ahead!! ;-). Personally, I wasn't fussed whether the game went ahead or not as one of my main concerns was to protect the pitch, but the Bromley manager made it known to me, the ref and to anyone else who would listen, just how keen they were for the game to go ahead – I said to the ref I don't want to influence the decision, so I'll leave you alone to get on with it. The ref soon let me know that he wanted to let the game go ahead, which was understandable, so we got ourselves ready to what was always going to be a tough match.

After an impeccably observed 2 minutes silence for Remembrance Sunday, the match commenced. We played a certain kind of formation today that suits the players that we had at our disposal due to injury/illness and representative duty. The game was 10 minutes old when Callum Nye found himself on the right hand side and out of nowhere, on the touchline, he fired in a shot that caught the keeper cold to put the young Darts 1 up. We refused to accept just the one goal for our attacking play and we kept Bromley on the back foot by sticking to our game plan and I have to say, that the players did their jobs to the letter. This brought further reward, when Luke White headed in a corner by Danny Nash to make the score 2-0 and it was at this stage that we seemed to be creating chances at will. We are playing as a really balanced side at the moment and it was from the left that our next opportunity to score came. A flowing move ended up with Lewis Sutherland having the ball at his foot, unfortunately Frazer's movement into the box, didn't bring the reward that his movement deserved and his header went just wide. Dartford controlled the game for the first 30 minutes but Bromley benefited from a rare lapse in concentration from the Darts defence which allowed them to pull a goal back 5 minutes before half-time. Everyone was set to go in at 2-1 up until Dartford were awarded a free kick in a central position on the edge of the area. This side is full of free kick takers but it was Luke White that got the nod this time and he stepped up to put the ball in the top, right hand corner.

Half-time score 3-1. This was a good first half performance against a side that was expected to cause us a lot of trouble, but despite having to make a few changes, we played very well and I don't think anyone could have argued with the score line. The players were reminded at half-time of three things, to keep their shape, to keep passing, and to compete in every challenge.

2nd half – No changes were made at half time and Dartford looked eager to ensure that their 2 goal cushion was maintained. To this end, it was Dartford that changed the score line when a trade mark run by Danny Crouch, saw him burst onto the edge of the area to fire the ball across the goalkeeper into the net. This was Dan's 7th goal

in 8 games and I think that there will be many more to come! 😊 I then made some changes with Tom Evers replacing Ola Ayoola, who had picked up a booking and Connor Heffernan who replaced Frazer Bent. Frazer had run himself into the ground and competed for absolutely everything. Frazer is a young man with a big future and he is getting better and better, game-by-game. Perhaps a bit of complacency set in as the Darts found themselves defending. It was at this stage that Adam Molloy stood up to be counted. Adam made four excellent saves in quick succession, a couple of which had the whole stand applauding. Despite what was thrown at him, Adam got something on every effort, and in such slippery conditions, it showed just what a good goalkeeper he has become. Adam's already represented the reserves side and I think he's another of the current 18s squad that has a lot to offer. Despite Bromley, who I'd like to add, haven't yet been beaten this season, coming back into the game, Dartford didn't stop creating chances. Callum Nye hit the crossbar with a cheeky chip and many other chances with other players went high or wide, but 4-1 didn't flatter us and the game goes to show that despite players missing through illness/injury and representative duty, there is enough ability in this squad to give most teams a good game.

MOTM: - Luke White – 2 great goals from an unfamiliar position, but special mention has to go to Adam Molloy for his excellent keeping in tough conditions and to Ashley Issuree who snuffed out the visitors main threat.

Team: - Molloy, Issuree, Eves, Ayoola (Evers), White, Heather ©, Nash, Crouch, Nye, Bent (Heffernan 65), Sutherland

Goals: - White (2), Nye, Crouch



MOTM: - Luke White

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