

Sunday 15th March

Dartford 3 Welling Utd 4 – written by Andy Weeks

After last weeks dropped points at Chatham, we were looking to make amends with the visit of Welling Utd. However, team plans were thrown into chaos, when a couple of players became unavailable. Unfortunately, these players were in the same position so we were forced to shuffle the pack and play players out of position. The one bright point regarding the team was that Charlie Crudden finally got to make his 1st start for the club. Charlie joined in July but suffered a very bad injury but has slowly worked his way back to fitness.

Welling have strung some good results lately, but it was the home side that took the lead after 2 minutes, when Danny Crouch lobbed the keeper from 30 yards for one of the finest goals I have seen so far this season. We were on top, but couldn't make our chances tell and the visitors equalised with a free header from a corner. Perhaps last weeks dropped points were playing on a few minds but we just weren't defending properly. We dug ourselves further into the mire, when we stood off and invited a shot from the left hand side. No-one closed down and the ball went in off the post, this was an easily avoidable goal. We pulled a goal back, when Charlie Crudden, crashed the ball home from a corner – not a bad return, 1 start, 1 goal! –

Half-time 2-2 - For the 2nd week running, I was explaining that despite not being at our best, we were still on track. I was also at pains to point out that players needed to concentrate on their own game rather than worry about other peoples performances.

The 2nd half was as attack minded as the first and we took the lead via the ever reliable Danny Crouch. Just after the interval, Marco was replaced by Frazer Bent and later in the game, Charlie Crudden was replaced by James Jordan. As I said at half-time I could only see us go on and win the game, but this wasn't to be when more poor defending allowed the visitors to equalise from close range. Even at this stage, I was still confident that we would get something out of the game, but just when I thought that our defending couldn't get any worse, with 5 minutes to go, we allowed a free strike from the edge of the area and this proved decisive giving the visitors their 4th goal and to put an end to the scoring.

This was the first time, this season, that we have conceded 4 goals in a game. We have conceded 3 on a couple of occasions but scored 5 in each game to win comfortably. It's a shock to the system, to see a normally resilient defence, leak 4 goals. I just hope that lessons have been learnt, not only with the poor defending but also the necessity to concentrate on your own game and to show commitment to the course week in week out.

Thursday 19th, sees a visit to Croydon Athletic in the quarter final of the John Ullman Cup. When I saw the draw for this competition, I remarked that this would be the hardest trophy to win. My view hasn't changed! We will have to play a lot better defensively both at the back and in midfield to come away with a positive result. Please don't get me wrong, the side hasn't suddenly disintegrated, we just had some bad breaks at the weekend but I'm backing this group of players to put in a far, far improved performance.

Team:- Molloy, Walter, Crudden, Eves, Issuree, Eyers, Nash, Crouch ©, Nye, Duarte, Sutherland.

Subs:- Bent, Jordan

Goals:- Crouch (2), Crudden

MOTM:- Charlie Crudden – great debut!