

This was an opportunity to progress in a competition, which is rightly held in high regard in the Kent Youth League. Having gone out at quarter final stage last year, we were looking to go all the way this year and continue our run of clean sheets in this competition. We have conceded 3 goals in this competition, and they all came in the 2<sup>nd</sup> round against Thamsmead Town, the current cup holders. We've had good results against Bredhurst, Thamesmead, Ramsgate and Dover. You're bound to go far in a cup competition when you keep 3 out of 4 clean sheets!

We were fortunate enough to be able to play this match on the 1<sup>st</sup> team pitch at Tonbridge Angels and this was the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting between the sides this season. We'd had a convincing win the first game of the season followed by a 1 nil win a couple of months later, so today was definitely a case of trying to ensure it wasn't 3<sup>rd</sup> time lucky for our opponents.

We went into this game with only 13 players as players were missing for one reason or another, but as often has been the case this season, I was confident that whatever side was put out would play well.

We hadn't played for a few weeks but we did have a fantastic training session last Thursday where we worked on passing & moving at a high tempo, and this was evident from the start in today's game.

The early stages of the game were dominated by Dartford but there was clearly a threat to come if we weren't on our game. Our first corner of the game came in the 20<sup>th</sup> minute when Billy Eves out jumped the home defence to power his header home from 10 yards. 10 minutes later, we doubled our lead when Danny Crouch fired home from 12 yards after some good work on the edge of the box by Callum Nye and Frazer Bent. This was not against the run of play and we also came close to scoring on a couple of occasions but the home goal keeper, pulled off some great saves.

With 5 minutes remaining in the half, Danny Crouch added his 2<sup>nd</sup> and Dartford's 3<sup>rd</sup> goal when he rifled home from the edge of the box.

So far the plan seemed to be working with Dartford in control thanks to their fast, flowing, passing game.

***Half-time score 3-0 to the visitors.***

*At half-time, I stressed the importance of keeping our shape, keeping our discipline and keeping the ball. I reminded the players of why we had a convincing lead and they seemed to take on board a couple of tactical changes that were made.*

The 2<sup>nd</sup> half started as the first had finished with Dartford on the attack and Luke White was unlucky to have his direct free kick ruled out for off-side. It didn't take long for the young Darts to get this out of their system. Danny Crouch unleashed an unstoppable shot from 25yards, which the keeper got both hands to, but such was the power of the shot, it still ended up in the top corner.

The game started to drift a little bit, so our pack was shuffled to bring on Tom Eyers and Connor Heffernan to replace Billy Eves and Frazer Bent. The game really was getting quite stale now so I made further changes pushing Sean Heather back to centre back, pushing Lewis Sutherland to left full back and pushing Luke White into central midfield. This resulted in Jack Walter being repositioned up front and this soon brought it's reward when Jack lobbed the keeper from 20 yards out. This was a great individual goal.

The game ended 5 nil and we now move on to meet Ashford Town in the final. This was a great team performance and special credit has to go to Crouchy for his 3 goals, however, man of the match went to Ashley Issuree, who didn't put a foot wrong, all game.

Everyone played their part today and the lads deserve their place in a final. This game was played in an excellent manner by both sides and Tonbridge Angels made us very welcome.

Photographs of this match will be on [www.kentyouthleague.co.uk](http://www.kentyouthleague.co.uk).

We return to league action on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> March, when we play Corinthians on the Community Pitch at Princes Park – 11am k/o. A game that could see us pull away from our 2<sup>nd</sup> placed rivals.

**TEAM:** [MOLLOY](#), [ISSUREE](#), [SUTHERLAND](#), [WALTER](#), [EVES](#), [NASH](#), [CROUCH](#), [HEATHER](#) ©, [WHITE](#), [NYE](#), [BENT](#)  
**SUBS:-** [HEFFERNAN](#), [EYERS](#)

**GOALS:-** EVES, WALTER, CROUCH (3)



MOTM:- Ashley Issuree



Crouchy – Hat-trick hero!

<http://www.dfc18.co.uk>