



St. Mary's Football Club

Match Report

ST Marys Athletic –v- Albion Star 18th Feb 2012

It was a case of déjà vu for St Marys at Shaftesbury Rec. against a strong Albion Star side as the same problem as last week again surfaced. St Marys were out of the traps quickly and passed their way to a 2 goal lead within the first 5 minutes, which really should have been 3 as a 1st minute strike from Conor Quinn was ruled out for an alleged hand-ball that never was. Quinn did net shortly with a good finish from close range after good interchange of passing with Conor O'Neill, Russell and Fulton. The lead was doubled when CJ Fulton made a great front post run and met Ryan Russell's long throw before bulleting a header past the helpless keeper.

On a small, tight pitch the lads had followed the Coaches instructions to play their 2 touch football, to move the ball on quickly and to keep their shape in midfield and defence. The lead appeared to go to their heads and, identical to last week, everyone suddenly wanted to be a goal hero and forgot their defensive duties and positions. The defence of O'Boyle, McAuley and Nagle were left exposed and although Conor Eastwood made some fine saves it was only a matter of time before Albion struck as the team were at 6's and 7's.

The end of first period came just in time and after the Coaches re-emphasised to play to our strengths, the 2nd period followed the same as the first with some great football played by St Marys through midfield. Smycek was winning plenty of tackles and headers whilst Fulton was instrumental with some great passing awareness and the Albion keeper made some fine block saves from O'Neill and Quinn. Russell was then sent clear following a defence splitting pass from O'Neill but again the keeper saved well. The deserved goal came when Russell struck with a fine low drive but instead of pushing on the lads again lost their way. They began to get out-muscled in all areas and the physical approach of Albion knocked the lads out of their stride. Albion got themselves back into the game with 2 quick strikes and then a long-range effort from 20 yards left Eastwood with no chance as it struck the bar and in, leaving the lads trailing going into the 3rd period.

After the break the lads had got the bit between their teeth and matched Albion physically in every department and again started to get on top. The defence of Nagle and O'Boyle began to attack and win every ball with Eastwood making some good runs on the right side of midfield. After hitting a post and a number of great blocks from Albion's keeper the just rewards came when the ball broke to McAuley on the edge of the box and he thundered a drive into the roof of the net from 15 yards. St Marys looked the likely winners with Russell unlucky when he slotted past the keeper only to see a defender slide back and clear off the line and another effort deflected onto the cross bar. Albion could have stolen it right at the end but for 2 fine saves from Smycek.

The lads played some excellent football in parts but can be most proud about the fight-back and determination they showed in battling their way back into the game. It was a good lesson learned about the physical aspects to the game which you also have to compete and win.

MAN of MATCH – CJ FULTON – Contributed in every area, defence and attack, with some excellent early passing and vision as well as chipping in with a great headed goal.