

Derby 1 Leeds 5

23/10/10

The rolling hills of the English Midlands came in and out of view as we travelled south towards the King George V's pitches in Derby. The undulating theme continued as the team ran out onto a steep pitch which came complete with its very own drumlins. We later discovered the pitch wasn't actually created as a result of glacial retreat but in fact the local council's foresight. The majority of this game was played in one half of the pitch; the council clearly knew this reporter's eyesight was failing, either that or referee's don't like running far in these parts? Undeterred by hills, the Leeds lads faced up to a Derby team who were having their first run-out of the season. Leeds soon ended the morning with a great win, 5 goals to one.

The first half of the match started with Leeds attacking downhill in their Blue and Yellow Kits. Derby played in the usual Rams Black and White. Devon Ward started the day with the first of his strong runs down the left side pushing a great pass although to his midfield.

Speculative shots initially started for Leeds city as the boys attacked a shell-shocked Derby.

At a second corner in a matter of minutes Leeds played a layoff from Sam McDermott back to Kelan on the right, then a Great Cross whipped from right to left across the face of the goal. In drove Rhys Walker with a driving header down into the bottom left of the goal. 1-0 Leeds and a fabulous start!

Derby had not broken out of defence yet and so the Leeds pressure continued. Some strong runs by Nathan Hawkhead through the middle continued Leeds intimidating presence on the ball. Rhys Walker ran through the middle early, slicing through with a neat jinks and a left foot shot, bang 2-0 up. At this point the Derby Rams were being made to look more like lambs.

Attacking down the right through Kelan Swales and Mark Giddens they linked up well. Sam McDermott checked inside, left foot strike - just wide to the right, Derby clear. The clearance only goes 20 yards and then Nathan dominating the centre strikes back -the balls in the air, it flies sweetly into the top left of the net. Another goal, 3-0. Now Leeds are moving, the previous week's losses at East Riding and Barnsley are long forgotten.

Next corner for Leeds, Clifford pulled away from their defence, lays the ball back creating mayhem for Derby and crucial space. As a result Nathan delivers another power shot and it's too good for their keeper (now on their 2nd one) 4-0. to Leeds The boys began to relax at this stage and Derby started to come back into the game. This period saw Joe Hayton and Cameron Dyas move into the game with some well timed tackles and decisive headers to keep the pressure on in attack. Fletcher Paley got a great view from goal as Kelan Swales and Mark Giddens continued their strong runs down the right. Fletcher did well to keep his focus and was eventually called into action twice to keep the ball away from the Leeds goal. From one of the kicks, Mark timed another run all the way into the Derby penalty box and on this occasion he was pulled down, the referee gave a penalty; but crucially played advantage. Mark swiftly got up and followed the ball, a slick cross left over the keeper and it was another gem of a goal. 5-0 to Leeds. Good advantage from the referee.

It was a game of attack as Leeds continued to ram it home to derby. Nathan and Joe Gardner proving to be dynamos in midfield, he eventually passed through to Sam who worked the left with Rhys and another header goes just wide to the right. At half time Leeds we're 5-0 nil up and cruising.

The Second half started with Leeds wondering how they were ever going to climb the hill. Certainly it was clear a bit of complacency had set in as the Leeds boys thought they would cruise to victory. Derby were certainly feeling shell-shocked and started to play with more drive and passion through the middle and so they came into the game more. Matthew Owen who had come on for Fletcher in the second half was forced to make two good saves early on. As predicted Derby were starting their aerial assault as they pushed downhill. They had even put a tall centre forward on to try and ask questions of the Leeds defence. Our Lads were up to the task though, James Shaw, Cameron and Joe put in the work, some great headers and a confident defensive performance.

As the Leeds strikers combined with the wingers and they found their shape, they started to create space. Alas it would prove to be a difficult day at the office in terms of hitting the target in the second half. As a team the Leeds lads left about 6 goals on the pitch, the Derby keeper did well, but Leeds should have done better and been more ruthless. Other teams will be less forgiving come matches further into the season.

Near the end Clifford and Rhys finally both put the ball in the back of the Derby net. Alas the linesman saw infringements that were clearly the result of altitude sickness and further goals were not to be. Derby's sub striker / keeper did catch Leeds defence on the hop with a break into an undefended half and got a consolation goal. However the real story of the day was Leeds attack. It was strong and looked slick on a difficult pitch.

Afterwards whilst warming up with a Tea, Doc said "we did very well, everyone showed good play and strong commitment , we lost that second half one-nil though, so we can still improve. Very pleased overall though."

Leeds City Schoolboys left the hills of Derby with a spring in their step and a good win under the belt. There are things this team can still work on, but all bodes well for the Walsall tour. "Bring on the Brum" as they say in these parts.