

## **Huyton -0 vs Leeds "B" - 1**

### **22nd<sup>th</sup> March 2011 – The City of Liverpool Football Centre, Liverpool. 6pm**

The lure of Liverpool beckoned the Leeds city schoolboys across the Pennines on a glorious spring day in March. The journey was trouble free and the boys arrived to clear blue skies, a temperature of 18 degrees and a great scouse welcome from their hosts.

The match was held at the Liverpool schools fabulous football centre in Walton, north of Anfield. The "City of Liverpool Soccer Centre" as its known, is a modern sporting complex. The pitches were academy like quality and the boys were excited at the prospect of a fast free flowing game against tough opposition.

In terms of the match, Leeds lined up in a 4-4-2 format to tackle Huyton.

The first half saw early pressure from Leeds and a good start with Danny Edwards driving on and shooting wide of the post in the early exchanges. Sam McDermott showed his class with a neat weave through the middle of the Huyton defence causing mayhem and again a shot that went close, just over the bar. The Leeds boys meant business.

Huyton played a good game, but Leeds B were equal to it and they started to dominate the first half possession. Leeds were working hard winning first ball through O'Neill and Kelan in the midfield. The passion play was great and they looked like they really wanted a win. The big pitch was providing plenty of space for both teams to show what they could do and the crowd were treated to a great display of one touch football and hard tackling. It was certainly Leeds B's strongest game in recent history.

The confidence of Ollie Worland and Joe Hayton at the back was mopping up the Huyton attack with big headers away and still O'Neill, Ned, Kelan and Joe battled and harried to keep possession. Huyton did catch Leeds on the break in the first half but Matthew Owen made a great save to his left, one on one with the striker. You got a sense that this was going to be Leeds day.

The second half was not without incident and high drama though. Huyton came out for the second half all guns blazing. Leeds B were equal to the challenge though as James Shaw, Marc Giddens, Mason Mail and Lewis Firbank joined the fray.

It was a story of strong heading and some frantic Leeds defence as the Huyton team started to penetrate and find their feet. Mason and Marc Giddens had to work really hard up and down the pitch connecting the play and stopping numerous attacks. Ned Dry and Lewis Firbank had three shots go wide and O'Neill and Sam McDermott both had shots saved by their keeper. As the final minutes ran down the Huyton pressure built and their striker ran and skipped over Eddie Copeland's leg but then went down just outside the box. To the crowds dismay the referee gave the free kick just outside Leeds area with about 30 seconds left on the clock. The tension built, the wall was four string and steadfast. Matthew Owen was in the set position and his usual vocal self. The run in from the Huyton striker was fast, the ball struck with power and it spun high, the Leeds defence jumped up, turned to look at the goal in hope. Matthew Owen jumped high, the defence needed to relax, the ball did not dip it went straight over the bar. What a relief!

Minutes later the referee blew the whistle and Leeds B had finally recorded their first major win and a well-deserved medal.