

Leeds A U11 -8 vs. Bradford U11 - 0

This West Yorkshire League match versus Bradford arrived on a typically "fresh" Saturday morning at St Theresa's. Our Leeds boys were in a relaxed mood after a strong start to the season and their comprehensive win against York the previous week. Complacency was not on Leeds agenda though and despite Bradford's valiant work rate it proved to be another "emphatic" win for the A team as they cruised home to a well deserved 8-0 victory.

My learned co-reporter Steve was unable to be at the match as Joe Gibson his son unfortunately wasn't well enough to play. (So we wish him a very speedy recovery.) Luckily this meant the opportunity for this B reporter to step up to the mark. Indeed it was a similar story for a Bradford side that due to inclement weather were playing only their first competitive match of the season having only started trials in October. As it turned out the match showed Leeds real strengths and the Bradford Coach later described the game as a "Baptism of Fire." The first half started brightly and that wasn't as a result of Bradford's luminous yellow shirts. It was the powerful running by Leeds speed merchants on the flanks, Bradley Reynolds and Rhys Walker, the "City Flyers" who both took early shots at goal that went just over the crossbar within the first few minutes. For this reporter, they really were the standout players of this match, with Rhys providing a hat-trick from the left and Bradley further goals, totally dominating from the right. As with all good games though, the Leeds defence was the foundation stone. They were very strong and it turned out Bradford could find no way out of their half for major periods due to the pace and grit shown by Leeds.

Dominic Healey was as usual "Roy Keane" like in his desire for the ball; he had been industrious in midfield all day, which set the tone and tempo. Matthew Hambleton, Jack Smyth and Joel Haley combined well early from defence to see off some Bradford foray's, they went nowhere and before long Nathan Hawkhead was running deep and he chipped a superb ball across the face of goal to the ever present Rhys Walker, who headed his 1st goal of the day. 1-0 to Leeds, what a start.

The match was all Leeds City at this stage and their superiority along the wings provided an easy outlet for them to attack Bradford. As ever Mr Tonge was the 12th man / linesman / stadium announcer with his wisdom and encouragement from well, I'd like to say sidelines, but we all know it was the pitch! It is true Leeds City Boys would need sponsorship from HM prison service to provide a technical area strong enough to contain him; he clearly wanted to kick every ball himself he was so passionate! The Leeds boys were a true reflection of their coaches leadership though and had no plans to sit back on their lead as per Italian football. No this was a 100 miles an hour Yorkshire derby played with "Tonge tenacity".

Two shots from Rhys then Bradley went wide but that didn't seem to be an issue. The boys were relaxing into the game showing flair and confidence. Louis Coates played one of his usual neat Brazilian flicks onto Nathan Hawkhead who then steamrollered his way through the middle and shot straight and direct and what would you know, through the keepers legs. This was clinical football to make it 2-0. Another good run from Rhys walker and he sailed in a cross, or was it? No it was in fact a well timed shot and another goal as it sailed into the top right. The crowd were now cheering at the spectacle. 3-0 to Leeds, this was really exceptional football. The standout Leeds players at this stage of the match moved to the defence. Jonathon Kayij was called into action from the back and played some sublime passes to turn defence into attack. His right boot found Josh Bell in the middle who showed his usual delicate touch to pass forward and cross. Bradley Reynolds shot, their keeper saved, but he could not stop Bradley making it 4-0 from the rebound. Louis Coates and Rhys Walker were both crossing so well, I'm really surprised Leeds United has not come knocking. Ken Bates loss is Leeds City's gain though and despite some further battles they continued to threaten as the end of the first half beckoned. From a distance the unsung keeper Matthew Owen was called into action on one breakaway with a fine save and some good distribution. Having to stay focused and concentrate whilst watching your outfield destroy the opposition is difficult, but he rose to his challenge and the break arrived and he delivered the required clean sheet to take Leeds 4-0 up.

The second half arrived with some more of that East Leeds November wind, but the Leeds Lads ignored the cold and started again with their usual pizzazz and vibrancy. Fletcher Paley, Cameron Dyas, Joe Pearson and Clifford Konadu had all come on for a second half that they hoped would deliver more opportunity. Bradford was a wounded animal though and before Leeds knew it they were running into the heart of the 18 yard box for what everyone thought was a certain goal. Everyone except for Fletcher Paley, he ran straight off his line and scooped the ball from their striker's feet as though they weren't there! This was probably the last nail in the coffin for Bradford. From this point on it was all Leeds. Clifford battled and jinked away to try and create space and had at least 4 shots saved. Joe Pearson made some strong runs through the middle, connecting to Bradley Reynolds again and the pressure told as he scored again to make it 5-0. Rhys Walker got his hat trick with another long floating shot over the keeper into the top right of the net to make it 6-0. Leeds were on fire, but still they wanted more. So much so, this reporter even saw Jack Smyth competing with his own players to take the ball forward. Both himself and Josh Bell showed true leadership in this game with their "never satisfied" attitude, they were a real credit to themselves and their team. It was no surprise when Joe Pearson drilled the ball away and scored number seven in the bottom left. This was closely followed by a neat interplay from the back straight forward. Cameron Dyas solid as ever, moved the ball which found its way to Clifford then through to Joe Pearson who moved it right over the top, the keeper missed it, and Bradley ran in for his final goal of the day to make it 8-0. Mr Tonge said at the end..."I'm very happy it was a great performance from the whole team; everyone did their job and can be really proud of that result. Bradford were on their first game, but that doesn't take anything away from a great team performance. "

In the final reckoning it was great to see another local derby and the Bradford boys never gave up in the face of adversity. We wish them well for the rest of their season. On the flip side though the Leeds City performance was exceptional and the lads played like eight goals wasn't enough. That clinical relentless desire for more is the sign of a great team and I have no doubt some trophies will be heading their way soon. If nothing else it provided good development and bodes well for the bigger challenges around the corner when the team travel to the Liverpool's of this world. Well done Leeds, a good start.