

Leeds SFA "B" u11 vs York SFA "A" U11 – 19th March 2011
St. Theresa's - 10.30am.

A glorious sunny Leeds morning greeted the arrival of the York A team to play a friendly match. York's rampaging reputation went before them like their "Viking" ancestors and certainly Leeds made quite a nervy start to the game, probably respecting their opposition too much. The last time these two teams met was on the bouncy Astro turf of the University of Hull. York won that day 3-1, so Leeds B hoped the grass pitch would enable them to meet York on closer terms.

St Theresa was unfortunately not shining on Leeds this morning despite the sunshine providing an air of optimism. So again it proved to be another story of small mistakes costing the team and missed chances at goal causing "what could have been" conversations. The game ended 3-0 but the scoreline wasn't really a fair reflection of the Leeds boy's effort and heart.

In terms of the match, Leeds lined up in a 3,1,4,2 format to tackle York. James Shaw, Mason Mail and Devon Ward started at the back, with O'Neill Ouinsou playing in defensive midfield. Kelan Swales was given the task of managing the right flank with Marc Giddens, Lewis Firbank and Joe Gardner providing the drive forward. Danny Edwards and for the first time Ollie Worland started up front as strikers.

The first half saw an early corner for quick pressure by York. The ensuing cross went really close, but keeper Matthew Owen was sharp off the mark and tipped the ball away over the bar to relieve the pressure. These early exchanges were all York attack and Leeds defence. Matthew Owen was certainly the talk of the half, more to do with the amount of saves he had to make. He put his body on the line, going down for minutes with a studded knee, but he stopped a certain goal in the process before soldiering on.

Despite this bravery York continued their attack at a frenzied pace and after another breakthrough their striker shot wide left, Matthew saved the first with a super stop, but their strikers ran in and scored from the ensuing rebound.

At the other end Lewis Firbank and Ollie Worland both had their chances on the break. Ollie's best chance ran across the York goal and their defence had to scramble it away. Leeds were starting to get up to pace and build an attack, but they just could not penetrate and pull a goal back.

The men of the first half were Matthew Owen and Devon Ward who worked so hard today in a desperate rear-guard action to keep the Viking marauders at bay.

Mr Rossiter and Mr Smith provided the inspirational words at half time and the Leeds boys ran out for the second half with a renewed sense of purpose. Eddie Copeland led the initial work from right back, forcing the ball forward with his infamous crosses from the flanks. Alas Leeds attack was somewhat muted by some big central defenders who managed to constantly put their foot in the way at the key moment. By this point Leeds had made some changes with Joe Hayton on, Ollie Worland moving back to join him in central defence and Sam McDermott and Ned Dry onto the right wing and centre midfield positions respectively.

At 1-0 it was looking as though Leeds could get back into the game, but York had other ideas. They powered down the left flank, through three Leeds tackles to score on the bottom right, making it 2-0. It certainly looked like another nail in the coffin, but the Leeds lads stuck to their task. They continued to battle and attack, but York were just too strong. Sam McDermott had some strong interplay with Ned Dry and Eddie Copeland. Joe Gardner tried down the left, but there was just no way through. York scrambled in their third from fumbled Leeds defence to win the match and take the spoils.

Leeds as ever can take pride that they did not give up. York A are a strong team and certainly at 1-0 our boys looked like they could get back into the game. The need to unlock defences and strike home the many chances that Leeds creates is vital.