

East Riding 2 – Leeds 2 12th February 2011

Leeds knew this would be a tough encounter as they had suffered a defeat on the same ground in October. Leeds possess the more gifted players but East Riding are a proud team with a good work ethic as a very talented Sheffield team found to their cost in a recent 1-0 defeat. Another problem for our boys was the state of the pitch at the Blackburn sports club, it's what is known in footballing terms as a great leveller.

Even so Leeds had the better of the chances in the first half, Clifford Konadu was a constant thorn in the side of the opposition defence with the speed he possesses, when he left two East Riding defenders in his slip stream on 6 minutes it looked like Leeds would take the lead but the goalie was out quick and blocked well. The goalkeeper was a steady performer throughout the match and Leeds had an annoying habit of trying to beat him with shots from 30 yards out, a tactic that was never going to work. When Leeds did get the better of him with another Clifford effort, the goal bound shot was spectacularly headed off the line by a resilient Riding defender. Jack Smyth and Louis Coates also came close for Leeds, Jack's dipping shot had the keeper back pedalling so much that he ended up tangled up in the net and Louis shot inches over after being set up by Rhys Walker. East riding have a bit of quality up front, they have a couple of players who have pace and the ability to turn defenders, when they combined on 17 minutes and the ball hit the back of the Leeds net the Leeds parents were relieved they see the linesman's flag up for offside. Moments later Leeds keeper Chris Littlewood was called into action and carried on his form of last week by coming off his line to save well. Leeds really knew they were in a battle and Dom Healey and Nathan Hawkhead in midfield were showing tremendous commitment, out wide Josh Bell showed some nice touches regardless of the conditions and the determined opponents while Joe Gibson on as a first half sub was as always his usual composed self in possession. Half time 0 – 0.

For the first twenty minutes of the second half Leeds were in control, our defence seemed to have mastered the home attack and Leeds were a goal to the good. Clifford latched on to a clever Nathan Hawkhead through ball to get his reward for his first half efforts by finishing to the keepers left. Half time sub Joe Pearson was showing his quality down the right hand side turning the East Riding left back inside out, when he came inside with nine minutes to go and latched onto a quality pass by Clifford he struck the ball first time with a shot that Peter Lorimer in his prime would have been proud of, the ball hit the back of the net and Mr Tonge jumped six foot in the air in celebration. 2 – 0 to Leeds and the game should have been over, Doc wasn't sure though, he isn't usually vocal from the touchline but as the boys made their way back to the half way line he was hammering home the point that they must concentrate and not allow our opponents back in the match. His advice fell on deaf ears, East Riding kicked off attacked, rode three weak tackles and fired the ball into the Leeds net, within 30 seconds we had given the ascendancy back to the opposition, East Riding were now full of confidence and the back four of Smyth, Dyas, Haley and Gibson were under pressure, they defended gallantly but when a corner was floated into the Leeds area the ball was only half cleared and with a touch of the inevitable the ball was smashed back into the net. Leeds managed to hold out to full time and Mr Tonge had a real job to do in rallying the troops for the 20 minutes of extra time.

Extra time was a wide open game but chances for both teams were surprisingly few as both sets of players were tiring, the final whistle sounded with stalemate and a replay, although a draw was probably a fair result Leeds were the more disappointed, the game was ours for the taking but we had shown a lack of concentration. We have good players who are capable of winning more than one trophy this year but unless we show more positional discipline and as much commitment in respect of getting back and defending as we do going forward we may come unstuck, even so on a better pitch at St. Theresa's I think we will be too strong for East Riding.