

Leeds 1 – Nottingham 1 12th March 2011

After witnessing an early season demolition of Nottingham I like others expected another Leeds rout at Fortress St. Theresa's. It's difficult to understand why it didn't really happen for Leeds today because apart from an opening flurry by the visitors which saw Joe Gibson heading off the line to save the day Leeds were in charge. There were also some fine individual performances, Matthew Hambleton dominated the Nottingham strikers at the back, breaking up play and moving into midfield to set up attacks, behind Matthew Cameron Dyas was his usual disciplined self in his sweeper role, full backs Jack Smyth and Joe Gibson linked well with the midfield who in turn played some good football. Dom Healey showed no ill effects of a tiring school trip to Northumberland and played well as did midfield partner Josh Bell who proved again when it comes to receiving the ball in tight areas, moving away from would be tacklers and still managing to deliver a good pass he has no peers. Out wide Brad Reynolds and Rhys Walker both usually more central midfield players worked hard as did Nathan Hawkhead and Joe Pearson up front who are dangerous with their shooting power. It was that power on 14 minutes that put Leeds 1up, Joe Pearson received a pass just outside the area after another forceful run by Matty Hambleton, his turn and low drive hit the corner of the net and should have been the catalyst for more Leeds goals but five minutes later Nottingham were level, a misunderstanding by Leeds that started 30 yards out from goal and continued into the area allowed Nottingham to equalise with a very fortunate goal that sent the teams in at half time all square.

Leeds made three changes at half time, Haley, Kayij and Konadu entered the fray and Leeds continued to dominate. Clifford Konadu's pace is always a plus for Leeds and he will always create chances for himself, he had three in the second half none of them easy and all three just past the post and in a way it was story of the match. The chances we created were half chances although Rhys Walker was unlucky when his shot was cleared off the line. The boys did play well today but there was that little bit of magic missing from the Leeds performance, that spark that is the difference between winning comfortably and having to settle for a draw. Maybe it was the vast St. Theresa surroundings, with only the under 11's playing the other pitches were deserted and the flat atmosphere maybe transferred itself onto the pitch or maybe we should give credit to the opposition who have suffered some poor results this year and a trip to Leeds must have been a daunting prospect. They defended well, worked hard and while they never troubled goal keepers Chris Littlewood and Fletcher Paley they were well organised by their coaches and for that reason a part of me thinks they just about deserved something out of the game.

It's East Riding in the cup next week and while a draw against Nottingham might be seen as a blip, with the talent we have on the field I am more than confident of a good result.