

Leeds 2 – Barnsley 3 16th April 2011

With the final of the West Yorkshire Cup at stake this was without doubt the most disappointing defeat of the season, Leeds didn't perform badly and it would be fair to say they were in control for 75% of the match. The sun was shining at St Theresa's today and so were Leeds in the first 20 minutes as they got off to a good start and dominated, Leeds were also 2 goals to the good courtesy of Josh Bell who finished well from an acute angle after an assist by Clifford Konadu then from Clifford himself who finished superbly with a 25 yard strike. Barnsley had no answer to the pace of the Leeds play, Dom Healy and Jonathan Kayij were bossing midfield, Josh Bell was showing some nice touches out wide and the defence of Smyth, Hambleton, Dyas and Gibson apart from being suspect to the odd long ball generally had things under control allowing goalkeeper Fletcher Paley to get in some late season sunbathing. Bell, Hawkhead, Healey and Konadu all had shots on goal that could have added to the Leeds lead and it was a case of how many will we score not could we lose. Decisions change games and on 23 minutes the ref pointed to the spot in Barnsley's favour, it was a controversial decision, did Fletcher really foul the Barnsley forward? It's irrelevant now and the facts are that Barnsley were back in the match at 2-1. Worse was to follow 5 minutes later when Barnsley equalised with only their second strike on goal after Leeds were guilty of not closing down quickly enough. The sayings "football's a cruel game" and "daylight robbery" sprung to mind as the teams made their way off at half time all square.

The second half was always going to be a battle, Barnsley were full of confidence after being resurrected from the dead, they still didn't show that much quality but they were definitely more of a goal threat with their determination and commitment and Leeds so good in the first half now seemed edgy. Apart from some nice inter play by Joel Haley and Rhys Walker down the left mid way through the half many of the passes were rushed. The game was now in the balance as the play moved from end to end, Rhys Walker was inches away from converting a Nathan Hawkhead shot and Clifford Konadu went close with a couple of chances while Leeds Keeper Fletcher Paley pulled off 2 magnificent saves as the visitors applied some pressure at the other end. Going into the last 10 minutes it was down to which team wanted the victory more and it must be said that the boys from South Yorkshire seemed to want their place in the final a little bit more than the Leeds boys. The winning goal was scored 6 minutes from time and was clinically executed by their striker. Leeds did have a couple of chances near the end but with Barnsley in the lead for the first time they were not going to let us back in the game. The sun was still shining at the final whistle but an air of gloom descended over St. Theresa's final score 3 -2 Barnsley.

A game that should have been dead and buried in the first half somehow managed to slip out of our grasp.