

Leeds 2 – Barnsley 1 (Green Un Cup) 29th April 2011

Leeds got revenge for their West Yorkshire cup defeat three weeks ago with a hard fought victory over Barnsley. Coach Mr Rossiter was presented with a headache before the game when he had to re adjust his team because of injury and illness. Joe Pearson and Jack Smyth were in the unaccustomed positions of right back and centre half as they accompanied regular defenders Matty Hambleton and Joe Gibson in the back four. In the first fifteen minutes Leeds looked to exorcise the ghost of the earlier defeat by tearing into the reds, a Joe Pearson cross was inches away from being converted goalwards by Rhys Walker then Rhys fired over after more pressure by the home side. The impressive Brad Reynolds along with Dom Healey were the real work horses in midfield and it was Brad who went close with a shot on the half volley after Barnsley failed to clear a corner on twelve minutes. Nathan Hawkhead had a couple of efforts on goal shooting over then just wide after Danny Edwards split the defence apart with the pass of the match. Leeds can be a very strange team they can be brilliant for fifteen minutes then for no apparent reason they lose their fluency and allow the opposition to dominate, this is what happened towards the end of the first half, thank goodness for the safe hands of goalkeeper Fletcher Paley who oozed confidence and kept a calm head as players around him were losing theirs. Barnsley were unlucky though when a shot just before the break came back off the Leeds post. Still with the score 0 – 0 at half time and Leeds playing with a slight wind advantage in the second half we were still the favourites to win the match.

Barnsley have a team who don't show much quality but do have a lot of pride and show bags of commitment and to get a result against them you must match them for this aspect of the game. The pleasing thing about the performance today is that the Leeds boys stood up to be counted and gave it their all. The game was never a classic but Leeds definitely deserved the victory. The first Leeds goal seven minutes into the second half can be attributed to three things, a wind assisted long ball by Nathan Hawkhead, the blistering pace of Clifford Konadu and the hesitation of the Barnsley keeper who didn't come off his line quickly enough, whichever way it was Clifford who forced the ball home to give Leeds the lead. Leeds should have put the game to bed after that but full credit to Barnsley for hitting back five minutes later when statuesque defending by Leeds from a Barnsley free kick allowed the opposition striker to fire the ball home. The game was now up for grabs, while Leeds were still the better team Barnsley were always a threat, in games as tight as this it's usually something special that wins the tie for one team or another and in Louis Coates Leeds have a free kick specialist that's up there with the best of them, his sublime strike with ten minutes to go from 30 yards out was worthy of winning any game. Barnsley kept fighting to the end and nearly equalised after confusion in the Leeds defence saw substitute goalkeeper Chris Littlewood save the day by saving the ball with his back when stranded just outside the area. Clifford Konadu was unlucky not to put the game completely out of the reach of Barnsley when he created two goal scoring opportunities out of nothing only to see his shots go agonisingly wide on both occasions. Leeds held out though and the jubilant scenes at the end showed how much this meant to all the boys.

A great result and a cup final to look forward to for Mr Rossiter and his boys.