

Green Un Cup Final 21st May 2011

Leeds 3 - Sheffield 1

Leeds Carnegie was the chosen venue for this titanic battle between two of district football's finest teams. Sheffield announced this week that several new players from various links would be drafted into their squad to guarantee victory for the boys from the steel city. This cut no ice with Leeds coaches Rossiter and Tonge whose response was "it makes not difference we're winning this one". This bullish attitude coupled with some very shrewd tactics that stifled the Sheffield threat out wide inspired Leeds to a memorable victory. It really is difficult to find a player in the Leeds team who didn't play his part this morning, from the moment Dom Healey hit the Sheffield number 11 with a thunderous challenge in the first two minutes Leeds were on their way. Healey a player who always plays the game with a smile on his face had a superb first half linking up well down the right hand side with the athletic Jack Smyth and Brad Reynolds who is playing his best football of the season. Down the left Joe Gibson, Jonathan Kayij and Joe Pearson were just as dangerous and in tune with each other as Leeds moved the ball from one side of the field to the other. At times it felt like we were playing with an extra man our possession of the ball was so good. The only disappointing aspect of the first half was our shooting in front of goal which undermined much of the approach play. It was important we went in at half time with a lead and two minutes before the break we got the goal our domination deserved, Jack Smyth's tremendous in swinging corner was too good for the Sheffield goalie and defender who could only help the ball into the oppositions net. As the teams went off for the half time break the boys in white knew the game was far from over, Sheffield are a very good side but they had failed to find their rhythm and had been out played. Our goal keeper Fletcher Paley had not really been tested but because of our inability to deal with crosses from corners or free kicks Sheffield had still created three clear cut chances, all missing the target, with two of them in the miss of the season category so Leeds would have to up their concentration levels in the second half.

The expected Sheffield second half fight back never really materialised and it was Leeds who were still playing the more fluent football and dominating midfield. Captain Nathan Hawkhead was setting a good example by covering every blade of grass but it was midfield partner Jonathan Kayij who would be high on the list for man of the match with another faultless performance. Every team needs a ball winner and in Jonathan Leeds have a player who not only tackles opponents but sometimes completely demolishes them in the fairest sense of the word. If Sheffield did get past the Leeds midfield they were met by centre backs Matthew Hambleton and Cameron Dyas who were in inspired form, Cameron's speed was essential today as Sheffield have some quick forwards and on more than one occasion he snuffed out the danger by coming across field to help out his full backs. Matthew is not only a good defender but also a very good footballer and another feature of the Leeds performance was Matthew's ability along with fellow defenders Healey and Gibson to pass the ball out from the back. Though Leeds had impressed all over the park it counts for nothing in football unless you can convert the good play into goals, in Clifford Konadu Leeds have that player and it was fitting that the last two goals of an exciting season should be scored by the player who has been very much the talisman for much of that season. His first a poachers finish after good work from Brad Reynolds and Jack Smyth, his second a Clifford special from outside the box that was hit low and hard into the corner of the net with effortless ease. In the last 20 minutes Leeds made substitutions, Littlewood, Walker, Coates, Haley and Bell all made cameo appearances and can all count themselves unlucky not to have started the game as the team was selected this morning with Sheffield in mind and which formation was best suited to stopping them, with different opposition and a different formation the team sheet might not have looked the same. Sheffield did score a consolation goal right at the death but by that time Jackie Batley was already on the phone to the engraver.

At the final whistle there was great joy and a little sadness that it's all coming to an end, the under 11's is a great experience for the boys both on the field and off. The Dads will also miss their Saturday fix even the "Victor Meldrews" as Mr Rossiter described some of us because the passion and the commitment that all the Leeds City Boys coaches provide have left our boys with some great memories.