

York v Leeds

Saturday 12th September 2014

This morning, when I woke to the sound of songbirds, opened the curtains to see a telly tubby sun rising over the distant hillside and then had 3 freshly laid, perfectly cooked poached eggs for breakfast I knew that, to quote Voltaire, all happens for the best in the best of all possible worlds... until we reached York. Now to be fair, I *should* have thought something was amiss when the clock on the York clubhouse roof said that we were kicking off at 7.20am..... I *should* have thought something was slightly off kilter when, at the line up before the match, our 14 Leeds players stood in a row which ended within the centre circle whilst the York team stretched past the centre circle, the penalty box, the dead ball line, round the goal posts, round the clubhouse and back to the January sales queue at BHS - and I certainly should have known something was wrong when Olly 'the train' Brown was paired against the biggest striker (York18) the world has ever seen - if he wears shoes smaller than a size 13, I'm a monkey's uncle. And then the York 5 from last week was wearing a different number (to throw us off the scent??)

The Leeds team started in the trenches with us already having lost 2 key players on the trip to the front line, goalie Tom NW (playing rugby) and Jack 'sick note' Backhouse (injury), however first blood was taken by the visiting side (that's us!) after the first few seconds when 'the all seeing eye' Ragan took the ball from the centre of the field out to the left and then floated a lovely curling ball into the bottom RHS of the net, even before I had cued up the dictation app and even before the York keeper had put his gloves on - nice..... 0-1. Next time though Mr Ragan, just check I'm ready please! The next attack was also Leeds' with 'harpoon' Bostan just shooting wide of the RHS post - ooooh, so close. And then York woke up. The Y18 set up a lovely run by last week's Y5 (now Y14) who loosed off a great shot, deftly saved by JD (with his Kenney Everett hands) in goal only to be followed up by another York attack, pulling the Leeds defence all out of sorts until Thomas 'slider' Woodeson completed a last ditch sliding tackle to save a certain goal. What a frenetic start with end to end action - York's big 18 then once again set up the super agile Y14 who was allowed free reign around the pitch, punching through the Leeds midfield (metaphorically!) at will then loosing off a shot from the RHS which JD dealt with admirably. The next attack was again by York and was scored when I wasn't looking (I know, I know, I wouldn't make a 5 live commentator) but when the Leeds parents complained vehemently and 'en masse' he admitted this was his first time as a referee and that he'd been joking when he allowed the goal and because it was a friendly game it didn't count, even though he did re-start from the centre spot again - strange way for the score to remain at 0-1, but hey, I'm just the reporter, what do I know. After the re-start, York continued their fine attacking style and scored from a lovely Y18 through ball to the very gifted Y9 who scored expertly. 1-1. York, with obviously their strongest 9 players were on fire whilst Leeds continued to fumble passes and generally struggle to settle down, until our newbie left back, George Pearson ran to the nearest telephone box and changed his outfit and became.... SUPER G! As he settled into his role more and more with some lovely tackling and then threading lovely through balls forward, York started to be pushed back and his confidence spread across the team, including the until then strangely absent midfield. Liam Dean changed out of his pyjamas and suddenly Ragan and he started stringing some considerably better passes together that actually reached the strikers to start the snowball rolling.... and then the whistle blew - dangnammit! 1-1 at the break.

Leeds started brighter at the start of sector 2 with a lovely run and cross from the left hand side from Jack 'nibbler' White which unfortunately missed the forwards as they were still in midfield. As the game settled to middle of the park play it became evident that York had changed a multitude of players as part of the friendly game agreement. This led to an unsettled York side and as such the Leeds confidence grew exponentially within seconds, with Ellis looking considerably stronger down the RHS of the pitch - go Ellis! York's 18 and 9 were off and it showed - Leeds seemed to punch through at ease with a lovely crunching tackle that deflected through the Y midfield by Harrison 'psycho' Batty (well, I couldn't nick name him anything else, could I??) to the harpoon which slotted it in the bottom RH corner 1-2. This woke York up and then came the attacking side we saw last week - queue the 'American president' rock formation of Woodeson, Brown and George at the back who played out of their skins and stopped the attackers in their

tracks. The distribution from defence then spurred Leeds on and as confidence grew, better passing came about with Matty 'junior' Webb and Dean linking well with Jarvis to harangue the Y defence whilst Ellis made a nuisance of himself down the RHS of the pitch. Pearson was a rabid dog down the left and soon, through a moment of sheer brilliance, he broke down the left and had a super run only for it to be snuffed out by the Y defence. Batty was by now having a whale of a time, with fantastic positional awareness and a lovely creative play that rivalled the right and left backs that had been the stars of the show so far – with 3 players creating play, the tide turned and Leeds' class really started to shine, with Junior Webb loosing off a lovely ball well saved by the Y keeper. The next Y attack ended as the ever confident Kenny Everett came off his line well to collect the ball before distributing it well to 'slider' Woodeson who whipped the ball to Brown on the LHS to Bostan in the penalty box who saw Junior Webb free on the right - and the rest is history – GOAL!!! 1-3. Pearson obviously hadn't been fed yesterday and this showed as his hunger took over and he collected a lovely switch ball from Batty and took a lovely shot which whistled past the RHS post after a touch by the keeper. Ooooooooooooo..... Cue the corner by JW, a typical goal poachers 'slot under the keeper' from Webb and another goal to the visitors to make it 1-4. From then it was all Leeds with a lovely run by Brown all the way down the LHS well saved by the Y keeper – well done goalie. And then, once again as Leeds got really into their stride the whistle blew again.

The last sector started well again for Leeds, especially considering that Y18, Y14 and Y9 were back on the pitch. Worryingly, so was the Y3 who was so solid last week, so a tougher sector was expected. Both sides decided to keep their attacking down the left hand side of the pitch which was fine for Woodeson and Batty as they just soaked it up and then distributed it back to the midfield. However, this is portraying a very settled Leeds side but in truth the York strength was unsettling the lads again – queue the 'are you alright lads?' from the bench – it's nice that the lads ignore the coaches just as much as their parents though. Then came a double substitution as George and Woodeson were taken off the the ensuing unsettlement led to a great Y attack, pulling the defence out of position, only to be saved by Mr Donohue who was having a great time in goal. Jarvis then started to shine, only to miss the RHS post by millimetres. The end to end play continued and shortly a foul by the Leeds defence led to a Y free kick, deafly taken and straight over JD – good goal. 2-4. And then the world went mad. A perfectly legal tackle by Brown led to a penalty to York who unfortunately skinned it so wide it went out for a throw in – phew, that was lucky! Still 2-4. And then the whistle blew again.

So, in summary, we need to settle down quicker and close down the opponents faster in the early stages but overall a few very good individual performances including great bedding in from the newer players and a fair 2-4 win for Leeds. Well done lads.