

Saturday 21st January 2017 v Nottingham Michael Dale Cup

The match kicked off with Brad W and Jack on the bench as a quick start for Leeds saw them 0-1 to the good in a matter of seconds as Jamie burst down the wing and fired across a ball that the defender deflected into the feet of Jake who stabbed home with the keeper stranded. Leeds were flying and Alfie found himself in acres of space but the ball didn't arrive as Russell on the other wing was unfairly floored to earn a free kick. Leeds smelt blood and were already playing a high line with every player wanting the ball and comfortable in possession. A fast passing move from Max to Sam to Alfie saw the latter show some nice touches but no finish as Jamie went down in the box. Another foray found Jamie in the box and although he beat his man he tried hitting the shot with the outside of his right boot when a left footed effort may have paid dividends. An amazing ball from Leo split Nottingham wide open and Jake went down in the box to muted appeals given the ref had awarded some soft free kicks to Nottingham moments earlier.

It was 0-2 soon though as Jamie whizzed down the left and fired across the keeper and in to the bottom corner. Jake then sent Jamie away with a neat pass but once again it was off target with his right after begging to be hit with his left. The game was one way traffic and Nottingham seemed to have opted for hood-ball to clear their lines but it just kept going back. Jake and Charlie almost capitalised on some hesitant defending and Russell could only shoot into the keepers arms. Nottingham did move forward but Harvey, Sam, Max and Alfie were on hand to pass the ball around without any danger although a few moments later a misplaced pass by Harvey allowed Nottingham a shot that Harvey collected comfortably. Some fine footwork by Leeds created a chance for Charlie who, with the keeper beaten, rattled the cross bar. Still 0-2 but very much in control. Nottingham did have a couple of crosses ably dealt with by first Max and then Sam. Nottingham then made Harvey produce a save, albeit bread and butter, as the whistle blew to end period one.

For period two Russell and Jamie were replaced by Jack and Brad W. Leeds escaped an early scare when Nottingham found space but could only shoot across goal. Jack was seeing a lot of the ball and Leeds were still comfortable on it but Harvey had to claw the ball away from the attackers feet as Nottingham seemed a different team. Brad W then had a shot but it was straight down the keepers throat before Jake tried one from distance. It was soon to be 0-3 as Jake knocked in from a yard out after Jack had lobbed the keeper and he could only knock it on to the bar. The old adage of following every ball in reaping its reward for the Leeds midfielder and moving him up into third on the goal scorers chart. Sam was beaten at the back for a Leeds but the Nottingham mans shot was speculative and easy for a Harvey although he had to be much more alert moments later as he collected the ball with confidence. Some fantastic work out wide from Brad W when he picked up what looked like a lost cause allowed him the opportunity to jinx his way past a couple of defenders before his screamer scorched off the bar taking some of the paint with it. At the other end a slip by Alfie allowed Nottingham to put in a dangerous cross but Max was on hand to deal with it. The resulting corner was whipped in but went harmlessly out. Leeds were still the better team and passing well but the intensity of the first period had evaporated. Leo then stopped what seemed a certain goal with Harvey beaten as Leeds then switched play and a searching ball from Jack gave Brad W work to do but do it he did and despite being under pressure he buried it for 0-4. Some nice movement by Leo and Jack at the edge of Nottingham's box couldn't reap rewards but that fourth goal had got Leeds to up their intensity again. Nottingham then strode forward and the pass evaded Sam and Alfie was unable to intervene despite his best efforts and a fine shot by Nottingham beat a diving Harvey for 1-4 and probably a deserved response for Nottingham's increased work rate. Brad W, Jake and Leo combined to sweep forward and won a corner which the Nottingham keeper claimed well. From his clearance though Leo took a little look before smashing the ball past the keeper who was off his line for 1-5 not long before the whistle blew. Jack was seeing a lot of the ball and Leeds were still comfortable on it but Harvey had to claw the ball away from the attackers feet as Nottingham seemed a different team.

Period three saw Alfie and Jake don the bibs as Jamie and a Russell re-entered play. A patchy start saw Leeds push forward. Brad W was stopped by a fine tackle and was unlucky with a cheeky back heel from the corner he'd won before a little bit of over confidence in the Leeds box saw them allow Nottingham a shot which was high, wide and handsome but a warning for complacency. Another Leeds corner saw Nottingham head off the line after Brad W won the header. Brad W then collected a weak goal kick by Nottingham but his shot was beyond the post. Moments later a further shot by Leeds was also wide after a cross from Jamie. Leeds were on the March again as a shot by Leo was wide but had the keeper worried and scurrying across his goal line.

Harvey was then called into action and made a great save before Russell cleared off the line and Sam did the same. They were fortunate the Nottingham striker had wanted a touch too many early doors. Some lovely triangles from

Sam, Leo and Jack followed as Leeds looked to stroke the ball around a very good surface. Jamie then won his side a corner as he couldn't quite beat four men. Sam then 'got a nose bleed' as he surged forward and high up the pitch but lost his footing as he was about to unleash the shot. Moments later it was 1-6 as Jamie sprinted forward from out wide and rounded the keeper before slotting home with his left! It was almost as though he read the reporters earlier contributions and wanted to prove him wrong!!! Leeds were confident and cruising and Sam was showing some silky feet at the back. At the other end Charlie shot just over and Jack blazed one wide from Charlie's cross. Leo then fired a shot wide after picking up the Nottingham goal kick unchallenged. Max and Charlie switched positions to allow Max some forward freedom for the final few minutes. Fine defensive work from Charlie who took time for a look before coolly passing to Max who threaded through for Jamie who in turn crossed for Brad W to fire into the net. 1-7 and a fantastic team goal.

The final whistle signalled an end to a brilliant team performance with some great passing, moving and vocals from the boys in blue.