

Saturday 25th March 2017 Home to Sheffield Schools. Cup Semi-Final.

The surface didn't look conducive to champagne football as it was in desperate need of a short back and sides but for the first time, in what seemed like forever, the sun was shining and Coach Olly was firing the lads up to face their nemesis.

The early exchanges were in the Sheffield half with Leo threading a ball through but nobody was alert to it. The first shot however belonged to Sheffield although Sam W and Ben were aware of the danger and took it in hand.

It was soon 0-1 to Sheffield as a hopeful lob beat the offside and Harvey was slow off his line as the striker ghosted in to volley over the advancing Leeds custodian. The next action was at the Leeds end when Sam W made a tackle before Ben gave away a corner that was whipped across goal and cleared by Charlie. It returned quickly though and Harvey was lobbed for 0-2. A nightmare start for Leeds.

Moments after the restart Charlie was upended in the box and a penalty was awarded that Brad P clinically dispatched. 1-2. Game on!

Another forward burst by Sheffield left Alfie chasing and his tackle ricocheted off Sam W and hammered the post.

Charlie then gave away a free kick at the corner of the box. It was lofted in from the keepers left and Harvey called for the ball, Ben left it and the ball somehow avoided the keepers hands and bounced under him and into the goal. 1-3 to Sheffield.

Alfie then limped off injured to be replaced by Max as Coach Olly switched Sam to left back and Ben to centre. Sheffield had another shot wide as Leeds threatened to disintegrate in this first period. Ben and Sam then combined to snuff out more danger before Harvey collected a cross-cum-shot under pressure. Brave hands from the young lad.

1-3 as the man in black ended the first period.

For period two an early corner for Sheffield was headed clear by Leo who'd been moved to centre half. Sheffield had started strongly again as Jack C gave away a free kick for a push and Sheffield contrived to deliver their worst ball of the day as Jack C cleared easily.

Jamie was then a willing runner for Jakes ball but he couldn't get a shot away. An excellent tackle by Sheffield in their own box thwarted Jamie. A beautiful sweeping move involving Jack C, Jake, Leo and Sam W broke down at Charlie's door as Leeds looked to switch the play. A flick from Jamie was magically popped through to Brad W by Charlie but the ball got stuck in the long grass as Sheffield were shouting 'Ref' and trying to influence decisions every time a challenge went in. They were certainly trying to stifle Leeds's flow as there was nothing untoward going on.

Leeds had grown into the game and so it will be an interesting final third. The period started back and forth with neither team settling before Hayden took a fantastic shot from wide that had the keeper at full stretch. A bit more to and fro followed as both teams wanted the victory. It was end to end stuff but both defences were on top.

Brad P was perhaps doing more at left back than Coach Olly would want but he needed to. Sheffield then had a shot just wide that Harvey had covered then collected a shot with the sun in his eyes.

Leeds were a blunt instrument upfront as the ball just wasn't getting there as Leo and Brad P were seeing too much of the ball at the back and Jack C alongside Charlie were having to drop deep to get the ball. With ten minutes left Leeds would need a gargantuan effort and it started from the foot of Jack C who fired in a free kick from thirty yards. 2-3. Game well and truly on!

A cross field ball by Brad P found Hayden in space and his shot was nudged wide by the diving keeper with both Jamie and Brad W lurking, perhaps a little look up could've paid dividends. The resultant corner was nipped off a Leeds head and the subsequent corner hit the side netting.

It felt as though Coach Olly was kicking every ball with his young charges as Jack C was unlucky in the danger area although he fluffed his second successive corner with support screaming at him from the bench and his dad wondering if his ticker could take much more. Sheffield had resorted to long ball clearances and could be thankful that their early onslaught had put daylight between them and Leeds.

With Brad W in space Sheffield looked to waste time with 'professional' injuries to take the sting out of Leeds' tail.

The final curtain fell on a 2-3 defeat for the home side. Very, very unlucky. But for a start that allowed the visitors an early gift Leeds were the better team in the second and third periods.

JAMIE 36

LITTLE BRAD 11

JAKE 9

BIG BRAD 9

IAN 6

JACK 6

CHARLIE 3

LEO 3

RUSSELL 2

OLLY P 2