

Leeds U11 v Derby U11s – 5th October 2013

Sector 1 as it will henceforth be referred to, began with the black and whites of Derby heading left to right on a flat pitch at St Theresa's (chez Leeds) against the home side's yellows. Ben Kenneally was back this week after sickness for the last match and looked at the off as though he was more than ready for the challenge after a week off. Jack Donohue in goal had the strength of Kenneally, Leyton Elliot Garbutt and the ever-reliable Jack Grassham shoring up the defence whilst the midfield of Harry Barton, Thomas Woodeson and Charlie Owen looked slightly more nervous at the beginning. What was reassuring was to see the attacking force of Taylor Thompson and Johnny White who, looked up for the battle Derby's first attack presented itself right down the centre and ended up already at this early stage with a 1:1 with the keeper, resulting in a free kick right outside the box. The strike was clean, directed at goal and luckily for us was managed to be flicked over by the sturdy 3 man wall. Worrying that the Derby team were already getting the rub of the green... The following corner resulted in a clearance however it was clear that 'Will', Derby's very tall central midfielder and number 4 was going to be instrumental in most of Derby's play during the match. The free kick that followed within the next 2 minutes or so awarded to Derby for a rash tackle resulted in a quickly taken attempt before our lads had even turned and faced... poor Jack Donohue obviously saw it late, and the resulting free ball was duly knocked into a wide open goal – 0-1 and all sense of having fun today duly evaporated. And so the honeymoon of last week's win was over and Leeds set to work. The midfield of Thomas Woodeson and Charlie Owen immediately were on the offensive with Owen immediately having a cracking shot on goal that was low and just wide of the left post – a great effort. The resulting corner by Thompson was deftly taken but well cleared by the Derby number 13 who was doing a sterling job of instructing his defence what to do and when... and then leading by example. However, as sector 1 continued the Derby pressure became a midfield tussle that in turn became Leeds dominance - Leeds began to boss the game with several attacks and several low, hard shots just ending up on the wrong side of the uprights – Thompson was in fine form and White was all over the Derby back 3 like a man possessed – young Mr Spence was also warming up nicely - it was only a matter of time before the attack minded Leeds scored... and then the whistle blew. 0-1 to the visitors.

The 2nd sector began with all 4 substitutes making their appearance – Haroon Bostan on the left in defence, Archie Owen on the left midfield replacing Charlie Owen, Jayden Richards on the left wing and Harry Barton in the centre - Woodeson, Elliot, Owen and White were off for a rest and as one would expect, it took time for the team to get back into their stride. Spence had a little attack down the centre within the first 5 minutes but the deft Derby 13 swept up nicely and the resulting corner was quickly brushed away by the visiting side. The following Derby attack was also snuffed out, in part due to a spectacular scissor kick clearance by Thompson, which actually hit his head... we may have found it funny, but boy was it effective! Derby remained attacking for the following 5 minutes or so with a couple more corners for the visitors before once again the pendulum swung back in the home side's favour. Archie Owen took a couple of very well taken corners and Richards found it hard to break through the sturdy Derby defence despite valiant effort. When the clearances came, Barton and Bostan were usually on hand to tidy up the overspill before dropping it back in for another attack by Spence. 15 minutes into sector 2, the Derby 14, the danger man, decided he would take a goal kick instead of the keeper.... cue a massive punt over all and sundry, dropping into the path of the Derby 3 who simply chased it and punted it into the Leeds goal past Donohue who barely had a chance... simple, not exactly pretty, but evidently effective. Spence was having none of these shenanigans – Kenneally and he both were up for it now, with all of the boys providing attack after attack and it wasn't long before Kenneally had a cracking shot on goal – lots of "oohs" and "aaahs" but despite their best efforts, Leeds just couldn't find the net... until the rebound came and Thompson was on hand to nudge the ball past the keeper – again, simple but effective – and nicely instinctive. The following 5 minutes was end to end stuff and there seemed to be a Russian standoff (yes, this is a real thing – it's not just the Mexicans who have all the fun!) despite Archie Owen's best attempts at some excellent corners. Spence once again trying to pepper the Derby goal but with no repayment for his efforts in terms of making a difference to the imaginary scoreboard – still 1-2 even though no-one in the Leeds support though this was a fair reflection of the state of things. Even the next attack by Derby was well anticipated by Donohue and, whilst was very close to the left hand post, was always under control. A Derby attack against the run of play was 'well anticipated' by the rump of Bostan and cleared well, even though that part of his personage must still be smarting! 1-2 at the close of sector 2. Whilst the team sat for their customary team talk by Mr. R at the break, the general consensus amongst the faithful was that Leeds were about to steal the show – a view, it is safe to say, that was not shared by the Derby supporters, who were now hoarse from the constant enthusiasm / shouting / encouragement from the sidelines. **Sector 3** began with 8 minutes of frenetic end to end activity with Garbutt having a cracking, powerful effort from distance that unfortunately was just wide of the right corner after a deflection from a Derby defender which would ordinarily have been a 'dead cert'. The resulting goal kick landed in the middle of the park and after a great tackle, Woodeson re-captured the ball before a lovely little pass to Spence who duly scored well and made everything even. Up the lads! The new found level of confidence amongst the team was now palpable and there followed several minutes of 'the Kenneally / Woodeson / Archie Owen / Spence' show, ravaging the Derby left hand side, but unfortunately not reaping any rewards. Leeds were now on fire at the prospect in hand and from this point on, put bluntly, there only was ever going to be one winning team. However, the excitement did result in some loss of shape due to the lack of width but as the Leeds torrent of attacks seemed to take precedence over structure, the team were now on a roll – wave after wave of Woodeson / Owen threading through to Spence in the Leeds attack was inevitably going to lead to more goals and it was not long before Derby was flattened by the decisive edge of Leeds, even though the last 10 minutes was a simply fantastic game, played in a great spirit. Even a misunderstanding between White and Bostan was well tidied up by Charlie Owen, who sensed the Derby break and ran all the way back to defence to make his presence known. The following attack was set up nicely by Archie Owen, being threaded through to Woodeson who made a blinding run through before slotting home the third to the keeper's left. Derby's loss of composure at this point made the result little more than academic and Richards charged forward down the left cutting inside and onto a Woodeson pass to score a screamer of a shot which didn't even dip before scorching the back of the net. The way he turned and celebrated said it all – job done.