



Leeds A met Nottingham in the WYSFA Cup Final on neutral turf at the impressive Sheffield Hallam University training facility. The Leeds team started brightly with Jonny White linking well with Barton and Wilson-Gales forcing a save from the Nottingham keeper, but it wasn't long before Nottingham took the lead. Pressure down their left forced the first corner of the match which was swung in at pace by the Nottingham number 9, and the number 4 was left unmarked in the box to head in powerfully. 1-0 to the yellows and less than five minutes gone.

The early goal seemed to knock Leeds who were second to the ball for a large part of the first sector, and Nottingham created more chances - the dangerous number 9 shot just wide, and Tom Nicholson-Watton claimed well from a corner. Leeds' best move of the first twenty minutes saw Wilson-Gales hit the crossbar with a cross/shot after good work from Bostan, and the Nottingham keeper also made a save from Woodeson's shot from outside the area. Too many passes were going astray though and the first sector of the game ended 1-0 to Nottingham.

The second twenty saw Barton being replaced by Liam Dean, and the team talk must have had some effect as Leeds were much improved. White passed to Holmes who shot over the bar, and Dean and Bostan caused panic in the Nottingham penalty area with chances being saved and cleared off the line before Dean hit the crossbar from the resulting corner. Nottingham were still pushing forward themselves and had a goal disallowed for offside, as well forcing a goal-line clearance after the number 12 got past the Leeds defence. They also denied by a save from Nicholson-Watton pushed which the ball onto the crossbar.

Leeds also made the Nottingham keeper work hard saving shots from Brown and Dean, and he had to be quick off his line to claim a lovely pass out of midfield by Holmes. In the final few minutes Joe Ingleson and Tom Spence came on to replace Johnson and Bostan, but despite chances at both ends and a much better showing from Leeds, the second twenty finished 1-0 to Nottingham.

Barton replaced Woodeson at the start of the final sector of the match. Immediately Nottingham were on the attack and with the Leeds team sitting back the instruction shouted from the sidelines was for Leeds to 'settle down and play football'. Holmes and Spence linked well to create space for Wilson-Gales but a great tackle snuffed out the opportunity. Leeds were building more attacking momentum as the minutes ticked by, and a tactical move by the Leeds coach saw the tireless Brown move up into midfield: Wilson-Gales' shot was cleared for a corner, which was swung in by Dean and Brown was there to score the equaliser with only three minutes left to go!

The Nottingham team were understandably deflated and as the first half of extra time started Leeds were looking more likely to score. Holmes, Spence and Ingleson set up a chance for Holmes to have a go at goal and Dean had an effort pushed over the bar for a corner. The best move of the match saw Leeds breaking quickly from the edge of their own area with a pass from Dean to Wilson-Gales who shot into the side-netting, but at the other end Nicholson-Watton pulled off another great save.

At the start of the second half of extra time Bostan replaced Wilson-Gales in a last tactical throw of the dice, and it was soon to pay off for Leeds. A fantastic run from White created an opportunity for Bostan whose shot hit a Nottingham defender and went out for a corner. Dean took it and Bostan powered in a header to make the score 2-1 to Leeds!

In the last tense minutes of the match the Leeds team (and supporters) were bolstered by Jack Backhouse's return to first team action after his injury, and Johnson also came on to replace Ingleson. Nottingham's last chance was a shot over the bar, and a foul on Johnson in the last minute helped to see out the final few seconds as Leeds held on for an extremely hard-fought and well-deserved victory.

Captain Will Holmes lifted the cup for Leeds and it's probably true to say that the last U11 Leeds A game of the season proved to be snapshot of the season as a whole: a difficult start, considerable improvement in the middle and a very successful conclusion.