

6TH SEPTEMBER 2014

YORK 1 LEEDS 1

So, today we embarked on the first match for the U12's LSFA and after the summer transfer market, there was cautious optimism from the parents for the coming season following what seems to be a good set of decision making throughout the trials – cue the chin scratching 'Doc' style 'glasses on the end of the nose' assessment by the parents of our new coaches from the side lines. Sorry, what do you mean that they are in charge, not the parents?!?!? Oh, right...

After the initial stumbling last year, the U11s finished the season strongly, *pillaging the foe wherever they stood against the unstoppable wave of Leeds' sheer power and awesomeness* (or at least that's how I remember it...). As a result the new summer signings of Harrison Batty, George Pearson, Taylor Ragan and Jack White had a lot to live up to (no pressure lads!) although we were all glad of a friendly run out before the 'start of the season proper' against a York team that were extremely strong at the start of 2013/14, giving our then newly formed team a bit of a whoopin' last year, running out deserved 7-2 victors.

As we assembled at the York ground the parents discussed the fact that York might be an easier foe this year as the long haired no. 5 had been picked up by an academy over the summer, only to see him trot out from the changing rooms – dangnammit! But that's ok, because with a still wind and beautiful weather, nothing could dampen the parents spirits even if Liam Dean's parents did attempt to set the cat amongst the pigeons by getting lost on their 200 yard trek from home to the ground, sparking a slight panic amongst the travelling support.

The first of 3 x 20 minute sectors started with strong York pressure for the first few minutes with the York 5 being involved in almost every move, mostly down the right hand side, although the finishing was a bit awry. The few Leeds forays into the fray of the York half initially were few and far between but as and when we did manage to reach the heady heights of their penalty box, it was always through Wilson-Gales (EWG from now on!) who was obviously starting the season as he finished the last, striking fear into the hearts of the foes' defenders down out RHS - obviously fed weatabix this morning! Scrappy passing from both sides usually ended up in bright starts breaking down almost as soon as they started and there followed a slight war of attrition over the next ten minutes in the centre of the pitch, although York did seem to be able to hold onto the ball better than Leeds. Our first threat came on 9 minutes when an encouraging move down the RHS led to a free kick taken by EWG which landed on the roof of the net – we were finally warming up and more importantly chilling a little. RELAX we could hear Dan shouting from the other side of the pitch – its a shame the lads 'couldn't hear' them at this stage. There followed a period of pressure from Leeds, with a Liam Dean shot being deflected out for a corner, nicely taken by Taylor Ragan which everyone managed to duck out of the way of (header training required...). There followed more Leeds pressure with nice link-up play between Jarvis Barker and Liam Dean forcing a high save from the evidently adept York keeper. Two York attacks showed that York were not happy to sit back and defend and thankfully the strength and pace of our newly crowned captain, Oliver Brown resulted in cool sliding tackles and a break down of the York attacks. The pace of the York 5 was apparent though as he 'skinned' Brown (not for the last time today) and eventually he loosed off a shot that was well stopped by Jake Donohue. There followed another period of 'middle ground' trench warfare before a seemingly harmless Leeds free kick taken just inside our own half to another Leeds defender was well intercepted by the York 9 who ran past Harrison Batty and slotted past the unfortunate Jake Donohue. 1-0 to York and as the whistle blew there was little complaint to be had.

Sector 2 saw the usual change of some players as the standard 'everyone gets to play 2 x 20 minute slots' was carried out. Leeds started with a considerably more relaxed approach now that they had warmed up (and had received the cool calm advice from the coaches) and it became immediately apparent that we were going to be a greater threat from the start, with a solid defence of Thomas 'cool as mustard' Woodeson, Olly 'the train' Brown and Jack 'ankle biter' Backhouse, Matty Webb, Taylor Ragan and Jack 'lefty' White in the midfield and 'harpoon' Bostan and Liam 'lanky' Dean up front. The skilful play of Bostan threading through the centre to EWG threatened the keeper on a couple of occasions in the first few minutes and a free kick taken by White was well headed out by the York defence. EWG once again was strong down the RHS although the man mountain of York 3 seemed too fast and marshalled him very well. Leeds once again managed a strong attack and White managed to loose off a high left footed cross which was fumbled by the keeper, only to be pounced on by the superb Matty Webb who coolly picked up the ball and slotted into the net. 1-1 and well deserved. York came back straight away with the tricky York 9 showing that he had no intention of lying down and letting Leeds command the game. On the next York foray, there was a superb passing display and a strong cross that was only stopped when Thomas Woodeson headed well away whilst under pressure. The resulting corner ended in the ball being pushed out only for the York 5 to shoot which was well taken by Tom Nicholson Watton (TNW). The weather now started closing in and the play turned to poor passing and little creativeness for a few minutes until a fair but obviously painful incident happened in the centre of the pitch where a York player was evidently hurt and was taken straight to hospital. Our thoughts are with him and hope he recovers soon, whatever the injury. As the rain continued to fall the game fell into stalemate and the supporters passed the time by talking about how well the umbrellas were stitched together.

Sector 3 began well for York as Brown was taken off and the defence initially struggled to cope with the change. York's 5 had a strong shot from the right which landed on the roof of the Leeds net and the next attack was well headed away by Woodeson. Over the next few minutes it became evident that some shape seemed to have been lost due in the Leeds side due to the changes in personnel and York took advantage of the side's lack of sureness straight away. After 6 minutes Leeds seemed to start melding again and after lovely build up from the defence all the way to the Harpoon at the front, a superb shot was had, deftly saved by a very good York keeper. There followed an attack by York once again and a superb shot by the York 9 was intercepted by a sliding tackle by Woodeson to save the blushes of a few poor tackles. Queue a change as the captain returned... Lovely build up play from the back via Matty Webb, Taylor Ragan and Liam Dean once again threatened the York goal and gained a corner, the result of which was a header by Taylor which landed on the roof of the York net – well done sir. York once again came back strongly for 5 minutes although the final touch was lacking and Leeds survived rather than thrived for a time. The York 9 took a beautiful corner, well headed away by the Harpoon. Terrible weather adds to the tension... Another 5 minutes of trench warfare ensued with the occasional attack by each side – the Leeds build up being fairly accurate although the final touch was unfortunately not quite accurate enough with 3 shots on the bounce going wide – a similar story to the same point in time 12 months ago. York again then gained confidence and took control with sustained pressure followed with rusty shots once again meaning an ultimate stalemate at the close.

So, 1-1 it finished and Leeds walked away with a considerably better result than the start of last season. The side seemed not quite to gel yet but that was expected with the change over the summer - an optimistic start however and some good subs from the coaches. I see rays of sunshine through the light clouds over yonder....