

### The Green 'Un Cup U11 tournament, Sheffield 12.01.19

The first competition of 2019 brought more success for the Leeds Schools Football U11 'B' team in the Green 'Un cup with more than a hint of déjà vu from their recent victory in the West Yorkshire cup in December.

With just 3 teams in their group, the Leeds team knew that a win in their first game would go a long way towards qualifying for the knockout rounds. With that motivation in mind, the team made a positive start against opponents Scarborough. The teams had met last year at the same stage of the West Yorkshire cup, this time Leeds doubled that winning margin. Ben Furness delivered a high cross for James Wilson to put away for the first. The second came less than a minute later when Carmelo Brandao shot from the edge of the area to beat the keeper.

With no Nottingham to play, the team had a 30 min break and could enter their second and final match knowing they had qualified for the semis with Scarborough losing to Sheffield.

Just like that wet day in December when both these teams met in the group stage of the West Yorkshire cup, Sheffield dominated the play. The home side looked confident and well organized as they held the majority of the possession and took an early lead. Just like that match, all the work for Leeds was at the back. Time and again, the Leeds defence cut out the Sheffield attack and ensured the score remained 1-0. Second in the group and a semifinal against Barnsley.

The Barnsley team had drawn against the Leeds A team and won their group thanks to a 4-0 demolition of East Riding, taking the top spot on goal difference from York. Their confidence showed for the first two-thirds of the semi. They scored first and took the game to Leeds who struggled to convert possession into attacking opportunity. Again it was left to the defence to limit the score to a single goal. Hard work paid off and when Carmelo Brandao drew their goalkeeper away from his line and passed across the face of goal, Manu Turner-Fielder was there to bring Leeds back into the game. 1-1 final score and a penalty shootout for a place in the final.

Goalkeeper Ethan Riley made the decisive save when he stopped Barnsley's third, but Leeds lost the advantage in the next round and by the time James Wilson stepped up for Leeds' fifth penalty, he had to score and took the game to sudden death. Goalkeeper Riley reacted quickly to save the Barnsley 6<sup>th</sup> penalty and it was all down to Morgan Crew who scored and took Leeds to the final.

So Leeds were here again, another tournament final against the Sheffield team that had dominated in their group match.

Leeds hadn't forgotten. They played the final like a team with something to prove and put Sheffield on the defensive from the start. Faster, more clinical and much more confident than the group game, it was an even match between two teams that both wanted to lift the trophy. The only goal came when Mahmoud scored with 5 minutes to go, connecting with a cross from the left to put it in the back of the net and give Leeds a huge chance to win the tournament. Sheffield answered by throwing everything forward, and the Leeds defence once again stepped up to do their job; a free kick that hit the bar, goalmouth scrambles and keeper Riley pulling off a fingertip save in the last minute. When the whistle blew, the Leeds team had repeated their success of only a month ago and this time without needing penalties!

