

Leeds B v Barnsley 9th October 2021

As the B Team for Leeds Schools' FA U11s awaited the starting whistle, hopes were high. Saturday morning's home match against Barnsley was their second of the season and a chance to show what they'd learnt from last week's defeat.

Within the first 40 seconds, hopes of an easier game were crushed. Barnsley took advantage of a sluggish start by Leeds, outsmarting the defensive unit to make the score 1-0. Panic set in and the team struggled to get the ball out of their own half for several minutes, until slick footwork by Dougie Jackson enabled him to jink past several defenders and cross the ball to Jane Turay, whose shot just missed the target. A second attempt at goal minutes later, by new addition Blake Forrest, also failed to level the match.

Leeds had woken up, but were still struggling against a physical and polished opposition. A succession of Barnsley goals in the 10th and 13th minutes made a Leeds win feel increasingly unlikely, yet the team kept their heads up and played on.

In the second third, Leeds began with renewed energy. Improved communication between defenders Logan Kingswood, Arthur Spiers and Manus Browne denied Barnsley any serious attempts at goal and swift passing between Kai'Relle Rose-Hunte, Liam Moore and Brodie Varley saw play finally move up the pitch. Leeds were rewarded in the 28th minute when Turay out-smarted Barnsley's defenders and goalkeeper to roll in their first goal of the season. A ruffled Barnsley came back fighting and the 32nd minute saw Leeds' goalkeeper Freddie Prudhames-Slatte forced to make an impressive double save. Several more attempts were fended off but with the Leeds team beginning to tire, Barnsley extended their lead to 4-1 in the 38th minute.

In the final third Leeds rediscovered their composure and confidence. The team dominated play from the outset, with Jacob Keddie's 43rd minute shot from outside the box missing the target by inches. A final Leeds goal came in the 55th minute from Jackson but time had run out. Despite the defeat, the 4-2 scoreline reflected a team that battled hard to stay in the game. Leeds coach Michael Rossiter observed that 'there's no easy games in district football.' Adding: 'This is a high level where mistakes are punished and those first 15 minutes killed any game plans. It was always going to take time for the team to gel, but they will grow and develop'.