

SATURDAY 1ST OCTOBER Leeds 0 v Sheffield 2

On the whole a deserved victory for Sheffield against a Leeds team who were quite clearly in their infancy and hadn't played much football together. Sheffield showed more composure and moved the ball quickly to break, at times, spirited pressure by Leeds. Sheffield's confidence on the ball was optimised by their talented number 11 who dictated their play. However, it was far from dominant going forward from Sheffield who played a defensive formation that left Leeds's lone forward isolated with hard earned possession lost on the front line. The game was often scrappy and, even given their inexperience, Leeds could have imposed themselves on the game with more sustained periods of intensity off the ball, and composure in possession.

Leeds defensive line often left their central defender exposed and would have found it easier to soak up attacking pressure by being more compact in the defensive phase. This frailty led to Sheffield's well taken second goal, with their attacker finding himself in too much space. This killed the game at a point when Leeds were very much in contention to level things up.

Leeds looked rusty in the early stages of the game but still found themselves with more possession in attacking areas. Flynn Pryde with a determined run down the right hand side that came to nothing. This was followed up by a free-kick played down the left to Lucas Horne who cut back and laid the ball off to Kaian Windsor who set up Jacob O'Flaherty for an early shot on goal. More joy down the left hand side with Kaian Windsor playing a ball into Billy Marsden who put the ball down the channel to Lucas Horne who found himself slightly offside.

Sheffield's first taste of forward pressure in the box saw a Leeds failure to clear their lines conceding the first goal, as smart finish over the stranded the goalkeeper.

Leeds shook off the disappointment of going a goal down with some good link up play down the right hand side by Charlie Eteen and Flynn Pryde leading to a Leeds corner.

More joy down the left hand side saw Lucas Horne making up good ground and winning a throw in high up the pitch.

A Sheffield attack lead to a good save from Spencer Grand who quickly played the ball into midfield to Jacob O'Flaherty who, with Sheffield players all around him confidently turned and played the ball into a wide area. This kind of composure in midfield showed that Leeds are capable of maintaining possession in tight areas and will surely look to demonstrate more of this capability in future games.

More possession down the left hand side saw Lucas Horne making a determined run down the left hand side beating his man and squaring the ball to Charlie Eteen who switched play well. A throw in on the left hand side and a flick on by Lucas Horne to Billy Marsden who beat two to win Leeds a corner.

Leeds best opportunity of the opening third saw a beautiful pinged ball by the Goalkeeper, Spencer Grand, to Lucas Horne who drove towards goal, crossed to the front post with no one there. Greater desire by the Leeds forward players to get to the front post could have seen Sheffield in trouble for the first time.

Leeds coming under some pressure for a phase saw Sheffield hit the post and almost doubling their lead.

The second third saw some calculated defending by Abdulrahman Abdullah and good support from Rafa Burton playing the ball calmly out of defence. Abdulrahman Abdullah showed that he will be a key part of the Leeds defence this season showing strength on the ball, good tackling ability and a calm presence being comfortable on the ball under pressure from the Sheffield attack.

The introduction of Joseph Secker changed the tone for Leeds having being dispossessed high up the pitch but winning it back with a determined slide tackle. This led to a greater intensity from Leeds during what was their most effective period of the game.

Again, intensity from Joseph Secker on the right, saw him win the ball, play it inside to Charlie who switched the ball to Lucas Horne on the left hand side. Lucas shot from outside of the area to force a Leeds corner. A lovely delivery saw Lucas Horne head over. A rare period of pressure was building for Leeds and with it their best opportunity thus far to get back into the game.

A break down the right hand side by Sheffield, against the run of play, saw a cross intercepted with solid hands from Spencer Grand.

A good run by Joseph Secker who beat his man well down the right hand side to cross the ball in but, again, Leeds forwards are outnumbered by Sheffield's defensive line with a failure to anticipate the cross. Leeds continued to be hampered by this as more balls forward come straight back into midfield to prevent Leeds from breaking.

Great intensity high up the pitch from Flynn Pryde to win the ball back for Leeds but leads to Sheffield calmly working the ball out of defence through their impressive number 11.

An aware switch by Billy set Flynn free who cut in from the right saw but his shot saved well at the front post, Leeds best opportunity to score.

A Sheffield attack and pin ball in the Leeds box sees a brave goal line clearance by Connor Masterton, who imposed himself on the game and broke play up well, brings an end to the second 3rd of the match.

A bright start to the final third by Leeds saw Rafa Burton shoot from far out and not far wide. Rafa involved again with a great ball to Kiane Windsor in an attacking position, with a good first touch and shot, again, not far wide. Although Sheffield are resolute and confident in the defensive phase, Leeds still having some opportunities to level things up.

Blazej Staszekiewicz is played through down the right and although is dispossessed with no options shows desire to win the ball back high up the pitch for Leeds. Blazej found himself exposed in forward areas with little help but still showed good work rate and willingness to chase down lost causes, on occasion winning possession for Leeds.

A calm back pass by the Sheffield defender draws a rare mistake by the Sheffield goalkeeper who picks the ball up to concede an in-direct free-kick in a dangerous area, directly in front of goal. A lay off by Billy Marsden to Flynn Pryde whose shot is deflected wide. Corner. Flynn involved again down the right hand side with a cross to the near post but, again, the Leeds attack fail to challenge for an opportunity on goal.

Miscommunication by Leeds and an exposed central defence allows a well taken goal by Sheffield and puts the game beyond Leeds reach in the closing stages.

A scrappy end to the game see's Leeds come close to pulling one back but Sheffield come out of the game deserving winners. Leeds were rarely put under significant pressure for sustained periods but a solid defensive performance, composure on the ball in midfield and their ability to move the ball quickly in tight areas ended up being the difference between the two teams.