

## Tunbridge Wells Mens I 2 Eastbourne II 1

In a pretty even game for much of the time and with TW just deserving their lead through much of the match, they nonetheless needed to sup deeply from the lucky cup to win with Eastbourne failing to convert 2 penalty flicks in the last 7 minutes.

TW started with their hallmark solid opening with the first 10 minutes or so a story of good control, progressive movement and deliberate exploration of the opposition. This suggested there would be a tactical and physical domination of the game. TW swung the ball first one way and then the other; with a backline consisting variously of Tom Clarke Knowles, Ed Norman, Chris Pelmore, Phil Newington, Sam Hart and Piers Fox, passing was orderly and with real authority; when necessary Jamie Knight and Jamie Harfoot appeared to ease any need for quicker thinking and movement during some heavy Eastbourne presses. The large squad allowed good rolling substitutions. Patience was rewarded by a goal which came after a brisk attack and Guy Pengelly converted well in a goalmouth scramble.

The goal seemed to wind the opposition with the ball being passed out of midfield easily, reaching Rout, Priestley and either Pengelly, Callum Wood or Ben Lang when they came on and who all used the ball with some swagger.

Nonetheless, the authority and control slipped away and ball speed and accuracy dropped too - Eastbourne coming back into the end of the first half with some alarming runs and creativity. TW were on the back foot. The half time came conveniently for the team 1 - 0 up especially as first Priestley and then Newington had had to retire hurt. Some repositioning of players would be necessary to try and fill their huge contributions in the first half.

Some order re-established, the game was put to the opposition again from the off, but not completely and Eastbourne too had had a break to regroup. They scored to level at 1 - 1.

Another hallmark of this year's TW 1st XI is their ability to come back when punched. So it was that swift movement from the back after one Eastbourne attack, with passing from all players bar the goalie resulted in a PC which, though intricate, was beautifully executed and Knight pierced the defence. 2 - 1.

The midfield was beginning to become the preserve of TW, with Harfoot, Knight and Rout linking well, and Callum Wood, Tom Clarke-Knowles and Ben Lang running usefully into space and presenting some real dangers of some more goals.

However there was a stutter into the second half and the threat and pivot, and, more critically, the passing was just not as crisp as it had been. Eastbourne began a final 15 minute period with the greater gusto and energy. Captain Harfoot, Chris Pelmore, Ed Norman and Piers Fox were tremendous at times putting in some spectacular tackles, but it was an Eastbourne tide that could not be kept at bay. A penalty flick was awarded to Eastbourne after some desperate tackling and relentless pressure with 7 minutes to go. Even though it was taken poorly and easily saved, TW could not keep from giving the ball away repeatedly and another flick soon followed. This time another Eastbourne player made a slightly better fist of it, but Goalie Gav Rimmer - who had been cool and efficient with his relatively little involvement throughout - summed up his performance with a fine second save in the circumstances.

As at half time, the full time whistle was welcome to TW ears.

Overall, a solid and gutsy TW performance, where goal chances were taken when available, but where the defensive team had most to do and did it well enough, was rewarded by another 3 points. 6 out of 9 so far for The Wells.

PMOM - Gav Rimmer.

MMOM - Ed Norman

## Tunbridge Wells Mens II 2 Burnt Ash II 1

Having beaten Burnt Ash 3's 4-2 last week there was concern that they may have worked out the TW game plan for this weeks encounter against their 2<sup>nd</sup> XI. Fortunately they didn't prove to be any better than their 3<sup>rd</sup> XI because if they had TW would have lost by a mile.

For the first 15 minutes Chris Romaine ran the midfield for TW and we were on top however once his lack of fitness came to the fore Burnt Ash came back into it! TW had a number of chances to take the lead in the first half but refused to capitalise on these.

The half time talk was about how much better TW were than Burnt Ash and that if TW kept the ball the 3 points would be in the bag. If only TW had heard the Burnt Ash talk because they came out of the blocks in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half with pace and passion that TW could not match. Within 2 Mins TW were 1-0 down and facing a penalty flick! Scott Crawford in goal clearly scares the opposition because it was one of the worst flicks I've seen in a long time (until the TW 1<sup>st</sup> XI game later on Saturday).

Still being 1-0 down TW took heart from the fact that it wasn't 2. Passes started to go to sticks and (like Man U) the team realised that they are capable of winning even when playing badly. A miss hit short corner, that the Burnt Ash keeper kicked over, brought parity and then with 5 minutes to go Chris Romaine finished with class to make it 2-1!

TW current run leaves them top of the league and there has to be a positive feeling within the squad however if they insist on not playing the ball to stick they may get found out later in the season!

### Tunbridge Wells Mens III 3 Sevenoaks IVa 1

Sevenoaks with their recent form went into this match as favourites. They started well, putting pressure on the Wells defence and winning a number short corners. Sevenoaks' young centre half sliced through the Wells middle. However the defence of Nick Higgs, Steve Tagg, Mark Mason and Mark Harrison kept them at bay. Wells had a number of counter attacks but did not score from these. The score remained 0-0 for the first half.

Wells made a tactical change at half time to mark the Sevenoaks centre half, which completely changed the game. In a determined and confident mood, Wells started to attack the Sevenoaks defence. Richard Hitchell won a shortly corner and Jeremy Giles duly banged it home to put Wells into the lead. Wells continued to dominate the game with Giles running into the D with a slip pass to Mauduit who ran around the keeper to score. Sevenoaks did not give up and made constant attacks but the solid keeping from Leo Garwood ensured they did not get back into the game. Wells final goal came from Roger Hynes who beat the keeper from an attack down the right. Wells started to tire and Sevenoaks sneaked a goal back. This was a great result for Wells and showed the effort put in by all the team with excellent play between them.

### TW Grasshoppers 3 – Kenley 2

A large Grasshopper squad eventually overcame Kenley in a competitive match after falling behind early on. At half time the score was 1-1 after Revell won a penalty stroke and converted it himself, when his shot was stopped on the line by a leg.

The Grasshoppers went ahead through another penalty converted by Tankard, again won when a shot, this time from Burton, was saved by a leg on the goalline following a short corner move. Both teams created plenty of opportunities, and yet the goalkeepers were not often tested, and it seemed that despite the chances to score it might end at 2-1. Then in the last quarter Kenley broke away again and this time took their opportunity as the defence failed to pick up all the attackers. Grasshoppers, however, struck back immediately with Tankard driving at the Kenley goal with a self-pass straight from the push off. He was fouled on the edge of the penalty area, and Ghosley deflected Poulton's shot from the pass following the free hit.

Other men's results: 2<sup>nd</sup> W 2-0 v Burnt Ash 2, 4<sup>th</sup> L 1-0 v Blackheath 5, Vets 1 L 2-0 v Sevenoaks, Vets 2 L 3-2 v Sevenoaks

### Tunbridge Wells Ladies V 0 Folkestone III 1

Allotted an over-abundance of forwards and a dearth of defence it was all hands to the pump. Real defender, Sam Barker, organised and instructed the newcomers and Wells only let in one goal in the first half.

In the second half Saskia Coakley Black moved to try left back and played like an old timer, while Elisabeth Floyd the established right wing moved to right back. Tellingly, no goal was scored in the second half and several chances were created as Hannah Humphrey-Baker made more forward runs. As a friendly match it offered several pointers to the way ahead.

Other ladies results: 1<sup>st</sup> drew 3-3 with Gore Court 1, 2<sup>nd</sup> lost 2-0 to Wapping 2, 4<sup>th</sup> lost 3-0 to Sevenoaks 5