

Match Report: Passmores 0-1 Stewards

Passmores' hallowed astro-turf was blighted last night by an unholy trinity of freezing conditions, unsavoury scenes and, worst of all, a match severely lacking in quality.

Passmores' year 10s took to the field in confident mood, perhaps buoyed by the return of the three amigos; Bobby McDonald, Harry Dorrington, and Tommy Newnham, freshly restored to the starting line up after starring for the year 11s a week previously, one commentator noting that the difference was akin to dropping from 'Man City to Bournemouth'.

This confidence seemed well placed in the early exchanges as Passmores came out the blocks quickly. 5 minutes in McDonald showed his obvious quality, first striding purposefully through the middle from centre back to launch a dangerous through ball with that cultured right foot of his before cleanly

pickpocketing a Steward's forward on the edge of the area to kill the ensuing counter-attack. It seemed somehow fated, in the week of the great Beckenbauer's death, to see his spirit so well preserved by a player like McDonald.



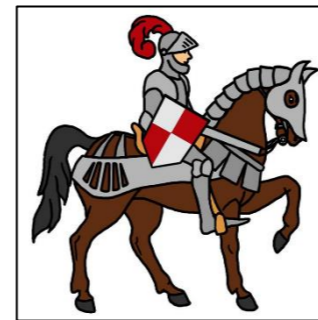
Not to be outdone, his centre back partner Newnham rose powerfully to meet an out-swinging corner from Dorrington, however, his header drifted agonisingly wide, the Steward's 'keeper rooted to the spot as the Passmore's Faithful looked on in despair.

At this point Stewards began to wake up and eke their way into the game. Great feet and an electric burst of pace from their captain and #7 took him past Joe Parker in midfield but fortunately left back Travis Morgan was on hand to slide in bravely and win the ball back.

It was a frenetic and frantic fixture, making up for what it lacked in quality with real heart, passion, and desire. A game that was short on goals, but endeavoured to fill that void with blood, sweat, tears and pure graft. Neither team

could put their foot on the ball or carve out consistent chances, and so, regrettably, it was an act of savagery rather than quality that ultimately turned the game.

Dorrington, a player who so effortlessly combines tactical nous, metronomic passing, and wily skills, received the ball, turned away smartly from the Steward's captain, and was bundled unceremoniously to the floor, a sequence of events that the Passmores Faithful have come to love. 'H', like some kind of bizarre boyish Busquets, has the ingenious quality of winning free kicks whenever he gets the ball. This was no exception until the Steward's captain, frustrated by his own inability to rob Dorrington, lashed out in anger, long after the referee's whistle had gone. Much credit must go to Jamie King who rushed to his young charge's defence like a modern day Sir Galahad, proving once again that on the hallowed astro, Passmores are a true family.



Steward's #7 had now taken on his inevitable role as the pantomime villain of the show and he relished his part. He showed man-like strength to take on 3 defenders at once and exquisite skill to turn away from Passmores' challenges flying in from all sides. However, he coupled this quality with an odd and troubling tendency to bark, literally bark, at opposition players and fans. Harry Lee, an industrious and determined presence all game up front, was the first to be on the receiving end of such behaviour and he seemed more bemused than intimidated by the outburst.

Sadly, Passmores can't be said to have kept their clean records here. Dorrington, ever level-headed and calculating, decided that revenge was a dish best served freezing. He was taken on by #7 down the right hand side, matching him for pace they went shoulder to shoulder for a few meters before 'H' cruelly lunged in with an horrific two-footed challenge which left both players heaped on the floor. The resulting free-kick came to nothing as 'keeper Bailey Adams saved confidently from a weak header.

Half time was called, 0-0 and sparks had begun to fly, prescient spectators could sense a forest fire coming.

The second half was all Steward's. The match was still lacking in quality but through sheer brute force and determination they began to take a choke hold over the game. First, a beautifully scooped through ball from #7 led to an impressive over the shoulder volley from a Steward's forward that was well held by Adams in net. Next, Matthew Montgomery, a hulking Thomas Parthey-esque figure in midfield, reached out on the edge of the area to nick a through ball, saving Passmores from certain doom. More long shots rained in on his goal but Adams stood firm like a cliff-edge battered by the waves but unmoving. Erosion though, as any good Geography teacher will tell you, is inevitable.

The deadlock was finally broken after a long ball to the back post was controlled expertly and slotted into the gaping net by, yes, you know who, the captain and #7, public enemy number one! Ecstatic celebrations followed and this goal seemed to knock all the air out of the Passmores' XI. The two Harrys, Lee and Smith, worked hard up top together but couldn't find any shooting opportunities. McDonald too, tried his best to conjure something up, storming again through the midfield past three players before being horrifically scythed down in unseemly fashion.

The game had now broken down beyond repair. It was a write off, tactically, with 5 minutes to go. Chances finally came for Passmores in the chaos with first Lee and then Newnham denied by poor finishing after good work by Montgomery who had moved into an advanced position.

But, it was too little, too late. The final whistle sounded and was met with jubilation from the assembled Steward's students on the side-lines. Passmores players trudged off dejectedly and Steward's made the short trip home in high spirits. One spectator, Stephanie Henderson at least was happy, remarking 'It was the greatest night of my life'.

MOTM: Bobby McDonald

Reporter at the scene: A Lovell