

Ilford 0 Tilbury 2
Monday 22nd January 2024
Essex Senior League
Report by Mason Hutchinson

It was a quick turnaround for Tilbury having to play Saturday and Monday, but The Dockers were up for the challenge with the opportunity to go 7 points clear. It was a trip to Maysbrook Park, home of Barking FC, to face Ilford who came off the back of a defeat at home to Frenford. Two changes were made from Saturday's winning side with Oli Spooner and Harvey Browne finding a starting place, replacing Alex Clark, who made his way to the bench, and Ben Marlow who was unavailable for selection.

Tilbury started the game on the front foot, almost finding an opener straight from kick off as Dan Trendall's cross to the near post was met by Harry Donovan. Donners got across his man well but his header was just wide of the post.

The visitors deployed a high press which proved to be extremely effective in the first half and almost led to a goal in the 10th minute. Ilford's keeper, Wilkinson Boatang, was closed down quickly by Roman Campbell who got across to block the clearance. The ball struck Campbell but ricocheted over the crossbar, a let off for the hosts.

But The Dockers would soon find their goal, as in the 11th minute a ball forward aimed for Campbell was cut out by Aoy. However, this wrong-footed the goalkeeper and saw the ball roll apologetically toward the goal-line. Muwanla was back to clear for Ilford but only into the feet of Roman Campbell who was on hand to fire home his easiest goal of the season.

And he almost found his brace right on the stroke of halftime as Oli Spooner played a pass down the line to Harvey Brown. Browne delivered a cross which found Campbell, but his headed effort was very well saved by the keeper who managed to tip the ball over the bar.

Tilbury started the second half with much the same intensity and threatened once again in the 55th minute. Harry Donovan unleashed a fantastic pass around the back of the Ilford defence and perfectly into the path of the late arriving Alex Clark. Unfortunately, Clarky's first time shot hammered the post.

The home side began to grow into the game and saw a lot more possession. They had an opportunity to find the all important equaliser when they caught Tilbury on the counterattack. The Foxes had a man over on the left-hand side and managed to work the ball across to Appiall. The captain found space for a shot which took a deflection, but Christian North was switched on to get across and make a routine save.

Then in the 76th minute, Tilbury finally found the second goal they were searching for. Sam Carter did well to step in and break up a spell of possession from Ilford, before fantastically splitting their defence to release Alex Clark on the right. The substitute bared down on goal and opened up his body to release his inner Thierry Henry and place the ball into the far corner.

But Clark was hungry for more and late on the winger cut inside to fire a low strike from distance and test the keeper. Boatang was down well to palm the ball onto the post, but Spooner was quick to pick up the scraps. Tilbury's skipper aimed for the near post, but the keeper was up onto his feet to complete a neat double save.

That was all the action at Maysbrook Park and Tilbury went home with all three points. The win saw them open the gap at the top of the Essex Senior League table to 7 points with 2 games in hand over Sporting Bengal in second. The Dockers are back in action on Saturday 27th January as we welcome White Ensign to Chadfields for a 3pm kick off.

SQUAD: North, McQueen, Hayes (Fry), Martin, Joynes, Donovan (Metalia), Carter, Spooner ©, Trendall (Clark), Browne, Campbell.

SUBS UNUSED: Page, Mokwenye.

GOALS: Campbell, Clark.