

Little Oakley 1 Tilbury 4 Saturday 6th January 2024 Essex Senior League

Report by Mason Hutchinson

As we returned from the Christmas break, it was time for us to play our first game of the New Year! A trip to Little Oakley was how we kickstarted 2024 where we also welcomed back, club captain, Oli Spooner from injury who featured on the bench. Dan Trendall also returned to action, as Ben Marlow kept his place in midfield.

The Dockers had the perfect start, taking the lead inside 12 minutes through Tilbury's number 9, Roman Campbell. The chance started with a Macauley Joynes free kick which was headed away but only as far as Campbell on the edge of the area. His strike was deflected which helped it on its way to deceiving the keeper and flying into the net.

What followed was a very scrappy game, not helped by the freezing conditions and boggy pitch. The hosts were able to test the keeper though and forced a fantastic improvised save from the foot of Christian North. A free kick was sent in toward the back post and after the striker was unable to connect with his header, the outstretched leg of North denied an equaliser.

And Tilbury were soon up the other end to double their lead when the referee played advantage after Joynes was fouled on the edge of the area. It was the perfect decision and Harry Donovan took control to bend his effort into the far corner, giving the keeper no chance of saving it.

However, Little Oakley would not lie down just yet as they netted a lifeline through Dan Rowe. The striker emphatically cannoned the ball home from close range to finish off a good move down the left-hand side, and to ask the question of Tilbury.

But the visitors had the answer, and scored their third of the match when Dan Trendall spun his man and drilled the ball across goal. Defender, Sibbons was first to get a touch on the cross, but his intervention looped over his own keeper and into the net.

And right at the death, Tilbury made sure that Little Oakley were down for the count, courtesy of a Trendall slotted finish past the keeper. Substitute Igli Metalia crafted the opportunity, receiving the ball on the half-turn and skipping past two challenges before threading the eye of a needle to find his winger through on goal.

That was all the action at the Memorial Ground and The Dockers remained a point clear at the top of the Essex Senior League table with three games in hand on, second placed, Sporting Bengal. Tilbury are back in action on Tuesday 9th January as we travel to face Halstead Town for a 7.45pm kick off.

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

SUBS UNUSED: Spooner.

GOALS: Campbell, Donovan, Trendall, Sibbons (OG)