

Sawbridgeworth Town 0 Tilbury 3 Saturday 21st October 2023 FA Vase ATT 72

Report by Mason Hutchinson

It was back to FA Vase duty as Tilbury journeyed up the M25 to face Spartan South Midlands side, Sawbridgeworth Town. The Dockers came into the game defending a 10-game unbeaten run whereas their opponents sat bottom of their league on just 3 points. But Tilbury wasn't complacent and put out a strong side making just one change from Tuesday's victory over Ilford. Alfie Fry was the man to be replaced as Jack McQueen started in place of him.

The visitors started the game brightly creating a chance inside 20 minutes when the ball fell to Dan Trendall just inside the 18-yard box. But Trendall was brilliantly denied by Ethan Gannon in the Sawbridgeworth net.

The Dockers came close again just 10 minutes later when Oli Spooner weaved through three challenges before setting the ball to Alex Clark arriving from the left-hand side. Clarky struck a rifle of a shot, but his effort hammered against the crossbar, and another Tilbury chance went begging.

Gannon was called to action once again when Trendall received the ball on the right flank. The winger cut inside and looked to bend an effort into the far corner, but the keeper's outstretched arm made another fantastic stop to keep the game level.

The away side continued to pile on the pressure and were awarded a penalty as Alex Clark was brought down after beating his man with a change of pace. Roman Campbell was the man who stepped up, but Ethan Gannon continued to have the game of his life, making a very good stop, and getting down to his right-hand side.

But the wall of Gannon was finally broken down when Trendall battled into a shooting position and poked the ball past the keeper to continue his goalscoring run and give Tilbury the lead before half-time.

The Dockers kept up the same intensity in the second half, finding a second goal just 2 minutes after the break. It was Dan Trendall who created the chance as he showcased his blistering pace to skip past the full-back and pick out Harry Donovan on the edge of the area. Donovan ran onto the strike and fired a rocket into the roof of the net.

Tilbury thought they had found their third when a perfectly weighted pass from Donovan found Alex Clark making a darting run on the left-hand side. Clark did brilliantly to rifle the ball into the near side bottom corner, but the linesman's flag was raised to disallow the goal.

However, Tilbury showed no signs of slowing down, coming forward once again, and pressing high up the pitch. Sawbridgeworth were forced into an awkward position on their own penalty area and allowed the ball to slip into the path of Roman Campbell, and he made no mistake this time putting his foot through the strike and finding the top right corner.

As the frustration set in for the hosts, a late challenge on Macauley Joynes caused a fight between the two men with players from both sides getting involved. Following a lengthy discussion with her linesmen, the referee handed out multiple yellow cards, two going to Sawbridgeworth players and two for Tilbury as Joynes and Martin were put into the book. Jack Hayes was given a yellow card, but it was his second of the game, so he was sent off, as well as George Spillane for Sawbridgeworth who was shown a straight red card.

That was all the action at Crofters End and the victory meant that Tilbury had made it 25 years (5 campaigns) since we were last knocked out of the FA Vase before the 2nd round. It was also an eleventh straight match without defeat as we prepare for the Essex Senior cup on Tuesday 24th October when we host Barkingside for a 7.45pm kick-off.

SQUAD: Page, McQueen, Joynes, Donovan (Metalia), Hayes, Martin, Carter, Spooner (Salter), Clark (Browne), Trendall, Campbell.

SUBS UNUSED: North, Mokwenye, Baker.

GOALS: Trendall, Donovan, Campbell.