

Tilbury 2 Takeley 1 Saturday 23rd December 2023 Essex Senior League ATT 215

Report by Mason Hutchinson

Following Tilbury's triumph on Penalties in the FA Vase, it was back to league action for the final game of 2023. The Dockers hosted Takeley with a chance to return to the top of the table depending on Sporting Bengal's result away to Little Oakley. Ben Marlow made his first start for the club after signing from Bishops Stortford and Harvey Brown also made his way into the lineup to replace the injured Dan Trendall. The final change to the side saw Connor Martin return from suspension, as Igli Metalia started on the bench.

It was a bright start from the hosts, almost opening the scoring inside 6 minutes. Debutant, Ben Marlow's delicate cross looped over the keeper toward Jack Hayes, but he couldn't get a connection on the effort. The ball was cleared but only as far as Sam Carter on the edge, but his strike was blocked brilliantly..... by Jack Hayes.

In the 35th minute, Alex Clark received the ball on the right-hand side before chopping back onto his left foot to deliver an in-swinging cross. The delivery goes through everybody and manages to evade the outstretched leg of Harvey Browne.

Then moments later, Clarky came close to breaking the deadlock when he burst past his marker and got his shot off across the face of goal. Unfortunately, the ball rolled agonisingly wide of the far post.

The missed chances almost came back to bite The Dockers, as Kevin Yeboah was released down the left wing for Takeley. His pace left him with just the keeper to beat, but after some excellent tracking back by Jack McQueen, the full-back did enough to put off the winger, whose shot flew over the bar.

Then, straight after the break, Tilbury came flying out of the traps to take the lead through Alex Clark. Roman Campbell won the ball in the middle of the park before spreading play out wide for Clarky to cannon his strike into the bottom corner.

Takeley thought they had found the leveller until a fantastic fingertip save from Christian North, denied Almeida-Joaquim's rocket of a strike from the edge of the area.

But in the 74th minute, Tilbury doubled their lead after some good work from Clark to accelerate past his man and force a save from the Takeley keeper. The ball ricocheted up to Harry Donovan whose scissor kick flew into the empty net.

There was enough time for Takeley to grab a consolation though as Southgate was brought down in the box by Connor Martin. Jordan Westcott stepped up to fire into the roof of the net, but that was all she wrote as The Dockers claimed all three points.

That was all the action at Chadfields and due to Sporting Bengal's loss at Little Oakley, Tilbury got to occupy the top spot over Christmas. The Dockers are back in action on January 6th as we travel to Little Oakley. From everybody at the club, we hope you have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, see you in 2024!

SQUAD: North, McQueen (Metalia), Joynes, Martin, Hayes, Marlow (Fry), Browne (Agiyi), Clark, Carter, Donovan, Campbell (Salter)

SUBS UNUSED: Page.

GOALS: Alex Clark, Harry Donovan

