

Needham Market 4

Tilbury 2

Saturday 30th August 2025

Emirates FA Cup First Round Qualifying

ATT 276

Report by Mason Hutchinson

Following bank holiday defeat away to top of the league Maldon & Tiptree, it was back to FA Cup action for Tilbury as we travelled to Southern League - Premier Central side, Needham Market. Marc and Liam made a couple of changes to the side from Monday, as Nathan Best returned to the starting 11 and new signing Alex Balisani was amongst the substitutes.

The Dockers got off to a quick start, finding Max Appauh early in the game. The winger stood up his full back just outside the area before cutting inside onto his right foot and letting off a shot. Unfortunately, the effort flew just over the bar.

Just two minutes later, Needham Market crafted an opportunity of their own down the left. The ball was fired into Luke Ingram with his back to goal, and the striker attempted to shoot on the swivel. However, the strike was sent wide.

The higher-level opposition began to take control of the game as they won a free kick deep in Tilbury's half. The shot was heading for the far top corner before it was brilliantly denied by Harry Fairs. The resulting corner proved to cause issues for The Dockers as a free header from Jake Dye was sent just over.

The Marketmen would eventually take the lead after 18 minutes, as another set piece troubled Tilbury. A deep corner was headed down, and Luke Ingram was first to react, poking over the line to take the lead.

And the hosts would swiftly double this lead with another break, down the left wing. This time, an early cross was met exceptionally well by Ingram, running across the front of his man to head home for his second of the day.

The visitors continued to push, searching for a way back into the tie. Tidy build-up play saw Dan Trendall find a pass down the line to Max Appauh, who spun his man brilliantly on the left touchline. The winger drove goalward and cut inside on the edge of the box once again, but his shot was always rising and flew over the bar.

Tilbury were the livelier of the two sides after the break, and their pressure proved vital as they pulled a goal back in the 51st minute. Luke Reeve carried the ball forward from right back and fizzed a pass to the edge of the area. The ball broke for Jamie Reynolds, and the midfielder rifled a volley into the bottom right-hand corner.

Straight after the goal, Marc and Liam made a triple substitution with Kieran Jones, Darren Phillips, and Jimmy Wallace coming on. And two of the substitutes linked up instantly, as Kieran Jones carried the ball through the middle and played a quick one-two with Phillips. However, the eventual strike was curled just wide.

And Tilbury's dominance would pay off when, in the 68th minute, Darren Phillips rose well to win the header and play it into the path of the arriving Max Appauh. Max burst through the middle of the Needham Market defence, showcasing brilliant strength to hold off his man before putting the ball through the keeper's legs to get back level.

Needham Market would take the lead again though, as a cross from the left wing found Ryan Miles unmarked in the area. Miles turned very well under pressure and calmly slotted into the bottom corner.

Then, as Tilbury committed men forward in the hope of an equaliser, another swift break from Needham Market saw them with an overload on the left. Ryan Miles was the man slotted through as he put the ball past Fairs to put the tie to bed and for his second goal of the game.

That was all the action as Tilbury put up a fight, but unfortunately, they were knocked out of The FA Cup. The Dockers are back in action as another FA competition rolls around next week. We travel to London Lions on Saturday 6th September, in the FA Trophy.

SQUAD: Fairs, Reeve, Hayes (c) (Wallace), Martin, Trendall, Carter, Konte (Jones), Reynolds, Appauh, Ward (Balisani), Best (Phillips).

Subs Unused: Aderibigbe.

GOALS: Jamie Reynolds, Max Appauh.