

Hullbridge 0 Tilbury 2 Saturday 28th October 2023 Essex Senior League ATT 190

Report by Mason Hutchinson

After a convincing win in the BBC Essex Senior Cup for Tilbury, it was time for them to take the short journey to face Hullbridge Sports in an early 6-pointer. Both sides sat joint top of the form guide and were equal on points at the start of the day, which all set up for a tight matchup between two even sides. New signing Ben Wyss started for Marc and Liam, with Christian North keeping his shirt between the sticks with Spooner and Page away on holiday. Jack McQueen also started in place of the suspended Jack Hayes.

The game was a very cagey affair in the first half with neither side threatening to take the lead. Hullbridge were the team on top though and came close with an Ofori strike which rattled the outside of the woodwork from a tight angle.

Alex Clark almost found the opener after Sam Carter foiled a Hullbridge counterattack and set the ball to the number 7. Clark spotted the keeper off his line and tried to re-create his goal a couple of weeks ago but this time the ball didn't dip in time and landed on the roof of the net.

The hosts continued to create more chances though and forced Christian North into multiple saves before the break with efforts from in and around the area, but nothing made its way past North in net, who got down well and held every shot.

Alex Clark began to come alive though and just before half-time he accelerated past his man and fired a ball into the box toward the arriving Harry Donovan. The ball managed to find Donovan but came at him with too much pace and bounced out for a goal-kick.

The Dockers seemed to come out for the second half a different team, looking a lot more dangerous in attack. But it would be Hullbridge who found the best chance of the game when Bruno Tavares fought brilliantly and poked the ball past North and toward the gaping goal. However, his effort was denied by the post as the ball struck the woodwork and bounced to safety in North's arms.

On the hour mark, Tilbury were awarded a free kick by the right sideline which was taken by Macauley Joynes. Joynes' set piece was deep into the area and met brilliantly by McQueen who rose above his marker but headed the ball over the crossbar. The visitors kept on looking for the all-important opener though and came close when a ball was fizzed into Harvey Browne just outside the 18-yard box. The ball bounced invitingly for a shot and Browne obliged, hitting a cannon of a volley toward the top corner which beat the keeper. But the ball seemed to be a magnet to the post as it once again struck the frame of the goal and bounced out for a goal-kick.

But with enough pressure, Hullbridge's resistance was going to break, and a mistake was all it took as Harvey Browne was pulled down inside the area and the referee was left with no choice but to point to the spot. Roman Campbell stepped up and the keeper got a hand to the strike but could not keep it out of the bottom corner.

Then the ruthlessness of Tilbury that we have become used to seeing continued as following a corner, the ball landed at the feet of Campbell to slot past the keeper and double The Dockers' lead right at the death.

That was all the action at Lower Road and another victory saw Tilbury climb to within 4 points of Woodford Town at the top of the Essex Senior League. The Dockers are back in action on Tuesday 31st October as we travel to Walthamstow for a 7.45 pm kick-off in the Thames-side Trophy.

SQUAD: North, Fry, Joynes, Donovan, McQueen, Martin, Clark (Mokwenye), Wyss (Salter), Campbell, Carter, Trendall (Browne).

SUBS UNUSED: Metalia, Plunkett.

GOALS: Campbell x 2