

## TILBURY 1 AVELEY 1 ATT 402

Following a devastating loss in a 6-goal thriller against Canvey, the Dockers welcomed high-flying Aveley to Chadfields for the first fixture of the new year. The visitors came off the back of a 2-1 win against tenants Grays Athletic and they hoped to keep a 100% record over Christmas today to put pressure on the teams at the top and continue the push for the title. Tilbury wanted to try and win a much needed 3 points as they sat 14<sup>th</sup> in the league table.

Tilbury started quite shaky as a misjudged header from the defence in the 3<sup>rd</sup> minute played George Sykes through, but Harry Girling was quick off his line to deal with the danger. Aveley kept the intensity up as 4 minutes later, Ogunrinde played through Sykes whose left footed strike across goal was dealt with by Girling who got down to his left very well.

It didn't take long for Aveley to take the lead as Jon Benton's free kick was sent into the box and found Alex Akrofi, who got his head on the end of the cross to direct the ball into the corner of the goal to give the Millers the lead.

The long ball over the top proved to be a problem for Tilbury as Benton found himself through after Girling misjudged his clearance. The attack was dealt with by a recovering captain, Ryan Boswell. Aveley were controlling the game as in the 19<sup>th</sup> minute another hopeful long ball forward found Ogunrinde on the right wing who was able to work his way to the by-line however, he couldn't pick out a teammate. The Millers had another chance not too long later through Sykes, who took too long to get his shot away and was challenged by Lee Noble. Aveley finished this dominant spell with Sykes riding a challenge, then skipping past another before his effort from outside of the box was fired over the bar.

The 37<sup>th</sup> minute saw the Dockers grow into the game as they entered a positive spell, as Lewis Smith drove forward before finding Chris Miller to his left. Miller cut inside onto his right foot and his low strike bounced back off the near post. The ball was worked back into the box towards the Tilbury skipper, but unfortunately Boswell's first-time effort was put wide. The last chance of the half came to Tilbury in the form of Olukolu, as he skipped past his men brilliantly on the right-hand side, he worked his way to the by-line, but his cross couldn't be controlled and went out for a goal kick.

Aveley attempted to start the second half strong to try and grab a much needed second goal and extend their lead. Their chance came in the 49<sup>th</sup> minute as Ogunrinde exploded past his man and found space on the right wing, but his cut back couldn't find a man in red. In the 54<sup>th</sup> minute the Aveley fans and players were not happy with the referee after he disregarded their claims for a penalty as Ogunrinde was allegedly brought down in the box.

Tilbury had to push for an equaliser and after a great display of skill from Roman Campbell to avoid a challenge, Ryan Boswell joined the counterattack before playing Smith towards the by-line, and his cross that was fizzed in caused problems for the Aveley defence and forced a corner for the Dockers.

Jon Benton had a free kick in the 69<sup>th</sup> minute, and his lovely delivery was unable to find a teammate and as Tilbury attempted to get the ball out of harms way, Aveley had another penalty claim denied by the referee which was met with more shouts from the jeering away fans. Not long later, Benton intercepted Tilbury's attempt to play out from the back, before wriggling and tip toeing his way into the box and firing low, but agonisingly wide, of the target.

The 75<sup>th</sup> minute introduced Igli Metalia who made an instant impact by chasing a long ball and winning a free kick on the edge of the box for his side. The resulting free kick was taken by Eljay Worrell who hit the wall and won a corner. The ball was worked out wide to Lewis Smith whose effort was deflected wide for another corner. Taken by Lee Noble, a lovely flat corner found super sub, Igli Metalia, who rose well, and his headed effort was directed past the keeper to level up the game in the 81<sup>st</sup> minute. Stoppage time saw Lee Noble's dead ball effort from 25 yards out pushed over the bar by Aveley keeper David Hughes.

The final whistle was met with a fight between the two local sides, but it was quickly broken up ended with handshakes as the points were shared in this outing.

That was all the action at the EMR stadium on the first day of 2022, and this good result means that Tilbury stay where they are in the league table ahead of facing Basildon United who sit 16<sup>th</sup>, in a real six pointer. This mid-table clash will take place on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> January away to Basildon.

Thank you for your continued support and Happy New Year from everyone at the club.

**SQUAD:** Girling, Boswell, Worrell, Noble, Allen G (Peart), Allen J, Olukolu (Metalia), Kendall, Campbell, Miller, Smith

**SUBS UNUSED:** Morton, Tiffin, Upton

Report by Mason Hutchinson

