

Tilbury 1

AFC Dunstable 0

Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> August 2025

Emirates FA Cup Preliminary Round

EMR Stadium

ATT 205

Report by Mason Hutchinson

Following victory on Tuesday against Concord Rangers, Tilbury kicked off their FA Cup campaign against Southern League – Central Division side, AFC Dunstable. Marc and Liam made just one change to the side that beat Concord Rangers in the week, as Connor Martin replaced the absent Jimmy Wallace.

The first chance of the game fell the way of the hosts, with Darren Phillips leaping above his marker to win the flick on and release Oli Spooner through the middle. The skipper advanced into the area, but the defender got back well to make a challenge. The rebound fell to Dan Trendall, but his effort was also well blocked and put out of play. The resulting corner was towards Phillips, who headed goal-ward, forcing a save from Matthew Bonsu.

The OD's came close after 35 minutes when Talibeh Jallow pressed well to win possession high up the pitch. Jallow tried his luck from distance, but Harry Fairs got down quickly to match the effort. However, the ball fell to George Joyce, who was unable to find the target and sent his rebound wide of the far post.

Tilbury took the lead before the break after some brilliant work from Medo Konte to stop a Dunstable counterattack and recycle a chance of our own. His pass was wide to Max Appauh on the right-hand side. The winger took a touch out of his feet and sent in a delightful cross to the back stick, where Darren Phillips was on hand to fire his header past Matthew Bonsu.

10 minutes after half-time, The Dockers had an opportunity to double their lead as Dan Trendall pressed high and won the ball in AFC Dunstable's penalty area. His square pass found Max Appauh, but the eventual strike was over the crossbar.

On the hour mark, the visitors were searching for an equaliser and caught Tilbury on the break, working the ball down the right. A low cross was fizzed in, but it was exceptionally anticipated and cut out by Luke Reeve.

The hosts managed to put the ball in the net again when they won a free kick on the left-hand side. New man, Lester Ward, sent in a beautiful delivery which was met by Luke Reeve and headed beyond the keeper to double our lead. However, his celebrations were cut short as the linesman raised his flag to rule out the goal.

In the dying moments, Tilbury managed to find a way past Bonsu yet again. Substitute Kieran Jones was on the pitch for just 10 seconds before he was released through the middle of the AFC Dunstable defence, and he made no mistake, calmly slotting the ball into the bottom corner. Unfortunately, the linesman once again disallowed the goal for offside.

That was all the action at The EMR Stadium, and Tilbury had advanced into the FA Cup First Round Qualifying. The Dockers are back in action on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> August, when we host Lowestoft Town in Isthmian League North action.

SQUAD: Fairs, Aderibigbe (Jones), Konte (Ward), Reeve, Martin, Spooner ©, Carter, Reynolds, Appauh (Best), Trendall, Phillips (Akintunde).

SUBS UNUSED: Nicholas-Davies, Addo, Bett.