

Hall Green Utd 2-1 Rothwell FC – (Cup)

Rothwell and Hall green were drawn together in the quarter finals of the cup, and Rothwell travelled to Denby Dale with a near full squad. Rothwell arrived typically early so the lads sat in the bar before it opened!

Rothwell went into the away team portacabin with only 12 men fitting in, and a fight ensued between young Ambler and Richards over the last seat.....both were dropped to the subs bench as a result, but it showed Rothwell were up for the fight. The lads who did get in got stripped and got out for an early warm up, apart from old wooden legs who has splinters in his shins!

Once the bees nest was cleared from the near goal the game could kick off. Rothwell maintained the 3-5-2 formation which has served them well over the last couple of months. There were no real surprises in the starting line up, with Tom “Jimmy Summerville” Greaves maintaining his place in the team and the return of veteran Tom Dufton, to add pace to the left side. Langstaff moved inside to central midfield with Thackeray and Robinson and Captain fantastic Arkle in the hole behind the young lad.

The game kicked off and as per standard process Rothwell started slowly. Hall Green were finding space early in midfield and Rothwell had to weather the storm. Alas, after 5 minutes an uncharacteristic accident from Thackeray lead to the 1st goal. The pitch was a disgrace from the moles living beneath, and when one of the moles got a flick to a Hall Green free kick the Hall Green striker managed to steal in front of the defence to open the scoring. Not the start Rothwell wanted and Thackeray would return later with a dog to find the vermin.

Rothwell managed to drag themselves back into the game, and there was plenty of time left. Robinson was putting in a great shift, his mid season problems seem firmly behind him. On 2 or 3 times he managed to get in behind the Hall green defence into good positions and put in good balls into the box. Unfortunately nobody was on hand to finish them off. Langstaff was putting in some good illegal hits in midfield and Pitts had tied mr tickles hands together before the game, there was not a free kick in sight. Veteran Tom Dufton was in fantastic form on his return, as he time and again belied his years to put in several superb balls which once again, could not be finished off by the Rothwell attack. However, mistake number 2 was not too far away for Rothwell. The Hall Green number nine took the ball into feet inside the penalty area and for no reason old wooden legs took it upon himself to dump him on his head. The referee had no choice but to award the penalty which was duly tucked away. Drury claimed he saw BigFoot's big bum in the woods retrieving a ball and this distracted him.

The half time whistle blew and Rothwell were 2-0 down. The half time team talk was positive as the score line didn't quite reflect what was a promising Rothwell performance. No changes at half time and the message was loud and clear...keep doing what you are doing. The 2nd half kicked off and again Rothwell started slowly and Hall Green would have a couple of attacks. However, Rothwell did tighten up and spent much time probing in Hall greens half, unfortunately to no avail. Hall Green were limited to attacking on the break but did look dangerous if their nippy front two

managed to turn the defence. Changes were made early in the half when Richards and Matthew John Lloyd were brought into the fray to add some creativity to an admittedly chunky midfield!

Rothwell very nearly managed to score immediately, with Richards showing good feet and threading a ball through to Arkle. Arkle tried to chip the goalkeeper, but it is unsure if the keeper came off his line or not, he was that big he was already 10 feet off his line when standing on his line! Rothwell applied pressure and managed to nick a goal when Mr Tickle Dufton rose majestically to head on goal from a Richards corner, with Arkle gobbling up the rebound. Game on, 2 minutes left. Unfortunately Rothwell couldn't create another telling chance in the last few seconds and the final whistle blew on a game that could have gone either way.

Rothwell certainly were not outplayed by a team rated higher, and could have won the game. A few players were maybe not on the ball today but there will be chance for reflection later.

Scorers – Arkle 1

MOM - Paul Arkle

Donkey of the Week – Thackeray for abject performance and the mole incident

Football Card winner - Unsure