

# MATCH REPORT

## League Game

25<sup>th</sup> September 2022

### Blacksmiths Arms FC 2 – 4 Coulsdon Athletic FC

Today saw Coulsdon Athletic FC on their travels up the hill to nearby Caterham to play the Blacksmiths Arms.

Only one game in and already after the pre-season and after winning that, there was a buzz of expectation in the local area about CAFC's return to senior football, and this led to travelling away fans - today's count was a heady seven, word was definitely getting round the manor.

Being the fact it was only the second game of the season, we didn't know what to expect from our oppo's but they had just lost 4-3 in the first game, so although we knew they were more than capable of scoring, after letting in four last week, they were obviously vulnerable at the back. The instruction was to get into them quickly and see where the weaknesses were.

Included in the Senior squad today saw some the youngsters on the bench, so Murf, Shawn, Dan and Lige were drafted in.

Playing against a team in blue and black meant the new yellow away kit got its first outing and The Yellows started well, moving the ball forward into the oppo's half quickly, and we were starting to carve out some good opportunities early doors. Josh was being his usual handful up front and Thomps and Mikey were operating each side of him and with Nath at no 10. Yeah baby, we were looking dangerous up front.

Haz and Kunz were not only protecting the back four but also providing that forward pass to feed the attack. The chances were now starting to come our way, one fell to Josh, and then Mikey created a shooting chance cutting inside, but was unlucky not to hit the target. We were knocking on the door and the game wasn't even 10 mins old.

In this time our defence had very little to do, but George, Charly, Johnny and Liam were dealing with anything that was coming through to them and Xander was a spectator.

We then won a corner after a good run by George down the right-hand side. Nath floated it in, and there was a scramble in the box, Haz stuck a foot out and prodded the ball to Josh - and Josh bundled the ball in for the lead for his first goal of the season! 1-0 to the mighty CAFC! In all honesty we were the better side and showing it.

It seemed that the first goal switched us off a little though, or possibly we became a bit over confident, because within two minutes the ball arrived to their centre forward, still a distance from goal, and we were slow to close him down as he moved the ball forward to the edge of the box, and at this point with no pressure, he unleashed a low drive, which left Xander no chance and it nestled in the onion bag for 1-1. A bell went off - yep, I think you'll find that's your alarm call lads.

It did wake us up to the risk, these fellas are great at giving a positive reaction, and we started to attack in waves, but as our oppo's were getting frustrated, they were fouling and regrouping to

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break up the attacks, leading to a half of free kicks. Typical Sunday league tactics when you're struggling against a team playing it around you. Worst of all, we had a ref that must have left his cards in the glove box of his motor, as this was a time when we needed to see them - if they weren't going to get cautioned, they were just going to keep doing it.

We had another couple of half chances for Josh, and Mikey dragged a shot just wide, and so we were still creating and dictating the game. Thomps was being a complete handful, although set up as our left winger today, he had the strength and the skill to roam, and he was creating some great openings, as well as being unlucky himself with a couple of long shots just flying wide when the keeper would have had no chance.

A frustrating end to half, in that we were level, but we should have been clear in front.

We had a chat at half time about the fact that we weren't actually doing much wrong, we just had to be patient, and hope that the ref would man up and stop these constant niggly fouls, and football would win out. We didn't make any changes at half time, as the 11 on pitch were fine and well, if it ain't broke and all that.

So, went out for the second half to make sure as far as the game goes, we tucked it to bed and read it a story.

On about 50 mins, our oppo's got themselves a rare corner after a bit of work down our right. The corner was swung over and met very well by their attacker and with a strong header all of a sudden, we found ourselves 2-1 down. Yeah, seems our oppo weren't reading the same book. Not happy. A game we were controlling and now we're behind!! Time for the mighty CAFC to show what they're made of? I had every confidence in these fellas, but we'll see....

Just had to continue to believe what we were doing was right, and thankfully, we soon got into our stride again, and we were moving the ball well through the lines. Between Mikey out wide and Thomps continuing to be a threat across the front line, we were carving out chances. Josh also had so much running in him, their defence was struggling with him. An attack brought a corner for us and when it was swung in Mikey met it beautifully - but it sailed just the wrong side of the post. As much as I wasn't worried about being behind, I wasn't liking all of the chances going begging.

On 55 mins, an attack saw the ball get fed to Josh, and a powerful run saw him brought down in the box - penalty!! Great run by Josh. Josh decided to take it.... and blasted it clean over the bar!! What were we saying about chances going begging....

A quick shout over to Josh to put it out of his mind and crack on made sure he got focused quickly, and it wasn't long after where we had a build up through Kunz, to Nath, and a lovely ball played in front of Mikey to run on to saw him carry it into the box on our right-hand side. This lad needed a goal, and with the swing of his right boot he connected good and proper with his laces. The ball flew like a rocket across goal to the keepers right. Yep, the keeper got down well - but stop it? He had two chances of that - and Slim had left town. Boooooom 2-2. Get in!! and no more than we deserved and our pony tailed attacker deserved. Pleased for the lad.

Now - could we please turn this into 3 points Coulsdon?! The oppo's continued with their 'Kick 'Em If They Move' approach, and frustratingly the ref still had t retrieved his cards from his motor. Nothing. Nish. Nada. So, the same thing kept happening.

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Then a great move that no amount of hacking could do anything about. A ball from Johnny to Haz, fed on to Thomps, with a beauty of a slide rule pass into the feet of Nath bursting into the box, and make mistake, it was banged into the net. 3-2 up now!! The yellow shirts were bouncing and starting to enjoy themselves.

Another strong run from Josh, and as he danced his way through two challenges, a badly mistimed challenge brought him down - penalty!! This time Josh stepped away and Thomps took it. He slotted it to the keepers right..... and the keeper guessed right, but thankfully parried it back to Thomps, and he made no mistake this time slotting it wide of the oppo's on rushing defence, and 4-2!!!! Come on Coulsdon!

My turn to perform, and we started to make some subs, first of all with fresh legs in Dan coming on for the hard-working Mikey, as well as Gallon slotting into midfield, pushing Kunz left wing, with Thomps off. Then Murf, Shawn and Lige made their senior debuts.

I organised them in midfield to a flat 3, to provide a bit more protection to the lead, and even then, we still carved out one more chance with a square ball that just eluded Murfs toes to unfortunately not add to the total.

And so Coulsdon closed the game out efficiently. You'll notice that Xander didn't get a mention once after their second goal on 50 mins, because he was again a spectator, giving praise to our defence for the work they did, when called upon on the rare occasions, to protect our goal.

Second game of the season and back-to-back wins - absolutely brilliant fellas, but not just 3 points, a hard fought and patient performance. No panicking - just focus. I just hope when the ref gets back home he finds his cards, I'd hate to think he's lost 'em forever poor lad.

As for the MOTM, there were 2 or 3 good performances, but Thomps was everywhere, working his minerals off, and playing a huge role in providing the Yellows the 3 valuable points.

Final Score Blacksmiths Arms 2 CAFC 4

Goals: Josh, Mikey, Nath, Thomps

Assisted: Haz, Nath, Thomps, Josh

MOTM: Thomps



FOOTBALL CLUB