

WEDNESDAY, 16 APRIL 2008

TIVERTON TOWN 1-1 BRACKLEY TOWN

British Gas Business Southern League Premier Division

If there was a feeling of end-of-season apathy at Corby last Saturday amongst the Tiverton Town team then they must have received a good verbal spanking prior to the match with Brackley four days later, and Martyn Rogers had clearly been less than impressed with the showing at Rockingham Road as his comments in the local press testified. There were two victims from the Northants no-show as Jason Hughes was dropped in favour of Nathan Rudge, the Tiverton captain returning after a four-match suspension, while Paul Wyatt was preferred to Tom Knighton at the opposite end of the pitch.

Wyatt was clearly keen to prove the sub-standard performance a few days earlier wasn't anything to do with him as he raced and chased, closed and tackled from the outset, and almost put the Yellows ahead with barely twenty seconds on the clock. Wyatt's tenacity had allowed Radley Veale to bustle his way into the Brackley Town penalty area, and when the midfielder lost control under a challenge the ball fell back to Wyatt who jinked outside Kamraon Abbassi but got too much upward purchase on his shot, allowing Richard Knight in the Saint's goal to watch the ball rocket over his crossbar. Wyatt's strike partner Simon Bochenski had got a taste of the mood and was as lively and just a willing in the early stages as he pressurised Knight into a rushed clearance but left-back Phil Murphy was on hand for the visitors to hack the ball clear from danger.

After the frantic start from the hosts Brackley forced their way into the match and had much the better of proceedings for the next twenty or thirty minutes, and took the lead after quarter of an hour through in-form loanee Jerome Anderson. Abbassi and Craig Richards combined on the right flank, leaving the Tiverton defence chasing shadows and Richards' cross landed perfectly on Anderson's forehead just six yards out after the striker had jinked clear of his marker. A third of the way through the match Brackley were denied a penalty when Richards tangled with Chris Vinnicombe in the area, and while the referee adjudged that both players had simply lost their footing it was a clash that undoubtedly would have seen the visitors awarded a free kick had it been anywhere else on the pitch.

Tiverton could barely even probe at the opponents' defensive line and the home support was growing frustrated at the lack of openings, wondering where an equalising goal might come from - Matty Bye sent a grass cutting free kick horribly wide of the mark, and another set piece from wide on the left was palmed over relatively easily by Knight as he backpeddled, and it looked for all the world that Brackley would peel their half time oranges with a small advantage. But even when the force be without you there is always the chance from a set play, and Bochenski once again showed his poachers instinct when he capitalised on a defensive error to poke home Vinnicombe's corner from close range just a few minutes before the interval. Brackley captain Dave Savage seemed for a moment to be incorporating the hand-to-ground concept of Gaelic Football from his homeland as he strove to keep the ball out of the goal, but even his best efforts couldn't deny Bochenski his eleventh of the season.

The lanky Alex Fisher, on work-experience from Oxford United replaced the anonymous Danny Spencer at the start of the second half, but the blonde beanpole barely saw the ball as Tiverton resumed with the upper hand. Rudge couldn't connect his head onto the ball from Vinnicombe's powerful cross, and just moments later Veale was unceremoniously upended after weaving his way through the Saints' defence, only for Vinnicombe to waste the resultant free kick. Tivvy desperately sought the goal that would take them into the lead and Matt Villis sent a powerful header just the wrong side of the upright from Bye's left sided corner, and Bobby Hopkinson dipped a shot just over the top.

Anderson was replaced with player/manager David Oldfield as Brackley looked to experience to get back into the game, but the ex-Luton Town striker spent most of the remainder of the game back chatting to the referee and lineman, and not once had a sight of goal. Chris Harper came closest for the hooped side but saw his shot bravely blocked by Adam Faux, and Oldfield worked his way into the book following a fracas with Hopkinson ten minutes from time. Bochenski added his name to the referee's notepad, becoming the third Tivvy player of the evening to see yellow following in the footsteps of Wyatt and Villis as the match stagnated in the closing stages.

There was one final chance for Tiverton to steal the points but Rudge rammed his volley powerfully against the crossbar with Knight doing little more than spectating, and the rebound was headed goalwards by the same player only for the Brackley defence to bundle the ball upfield. The game closed with Abbassi spelling his name to the referee after a smart foul on Veale just as the Tivvy midfielder looked to have broken through on goal, and the final 1-1 score was probably a fair reflection on the game as a whole. Brackley Town certainly had the better of the first period without ever threatening the scorers after taking the lead, while Tiverton edged the second half and were left once again to rue their lack of cutting edge up front.

Tiverton Town: Martin Horsell; Will Gardner (Danny O'Brien 77), Chris Vinnicombe, Matt Villis, Nathan Rudge, Adam Faux, Matty Bye, Paul Wyatt, Simon Bochenski, Bobby Hopkinson, Radley Veale

Goals: Bochenski 41

Booked: Villis 29, Wyatt 45, Bochenski 82

Sent Off: None

Brackley Town: Richard Knight; Kamran Abbassi, Phil Murphy, Guy Hadland, Josh Green, Craig Richards, Dave Savage, Danny Spencer (Alex Fisher 46), Jerome Anderson (David Oldfield 69), Chris Harper

Goals: Anderson 15

Booked: Oldfield 80, Abbassi 89

Sent Off: None

Attendance: 198