

SATURDAY, 25 AUGUST 2007

## TIVERTON TOWN 3-0 BEDFORD TOWN

BGB Southern League Premier Division

Sometimes things aren't all that they seem, and Tiverton's home tie against Bedford Town was a case in point. The Eagles has already conceded a brace of late, late goals in their opening match against Bromsgrove Rovers, and contrived to emulate the achievement at Ladysmead last Saturday despite dominating much of the second period. It wasn't that Bedford particularly shot themselves in the foot - indeed they did just about everything right, and we on the wrong end of a debateable refereeing decision with a matter of minutes remaining which seemed to knock the stuffing out of them. Credit should go to Tivvy for being able to capitalise, but make no mistake; the final 3-0 scoreline flatters the Yellows somewhat.

A cautious start by both teams was punctuated after six minutes when an initially harmless overweighted through-ball suddenly looked to be falling well short of Ray Johnston in the Town goal, but with Stuart Sinclair racing through from midfield the custodian finally decided to amble to the edge of his area and clear the ball to safety. Tom Knighton shot weakly at the other end and Ian Draycott barely tested Johnston with a weak shot after a few neat touches as the game already looked to be heading towards a stalemate. Tivvy's defensive line was seldom bothered but Nathan Rudge lackadaisically headed the ball back into his own area, and perversely this brought about Tiverton's best chance of the first half. Johnston beat Draycott to the ball and punted long down the Yellows' left wing where Knighton was waiting in acres of space. The young centre forward skipped past the only challenge but the ball was inches too far ahead of him and as he prodded it goalwards Andrew Stevens slid out to smother at the second attempt.

James Hatch shot wide for the visitors, while Craig Grieve skied one from an acute angle as the Eagles were limited to audacious attempts from distance. Meanwhile Tiverton were equally as unthreatening, and only a Carl Cliff-Brown shot called Stevens into action in what was a rather unenthralling first half.

Glenn Gould replaced the injured Will Gardner at half-time but the Youth team midfielder was not able to offer much more in the way of forward impetus, and it was Bedford who came close to opening the scoring with five minutes played in the second half. Grieve overlapped on the right wing and pinned a cross towards the near post which was hacked away for a corner by Cliff-Brown who had tracked back the entire length of the pitch as Rob Miller has initially escaped past Chris Vinnicombe down the Tiverton left side. But no sooner had the resulting corner been scrambled away that a true touch of class put the home side ahead. Vinnicombe, eager to push forward found himself, ball at feet on the edge of the Bedford penalty area. A neat one-two with Knighton pierced the defence and the evergreen Vinnicombe smashed home a volley from twelve yards that saw Stevens looking on in admiration.

In the lead against the run of play, the goal didn't settle Tivvy and Bedford predictably pushed on in search of an equaliser. But for all their graft the travelling team couldn't conjure up anything meaningful and Tivvy looked dangerous on the break. Paul Wyatt was introduced and immediately set about unsettling the tired Eagles defence. Stevens denied the striker and then saved a 25 yard free kick from Cliff-Brown, before using everything but his hands as he somehow cleared a shot from the Tivvy number ten. With moments left to go it looked like Bedford had levelled. However, Michael Lyon saw his scrambled effort rule out for offside after Johnston had done well to block Miller's initial shot.

Straight up the other end raced Tivvy, one long ball, one Paul Wyatt against one lumbering defender. No contest! Wyatt took the ball forward, rounded the 'keeper and swung in a shot from the corner of the penalty area to make the points safe. It may have been rough justice on Bedford, but for all their possession they weren't able to unhinge the Yellows backline, and to compound their misery Wyatt escaped again deep into stoppage time, laid the ball to Cliff-Brown, who in turn found Chris Young unmarked to complete the scoring.

The record books only say Tivvy won 3-0, and the first clean sheet of the season was as welcome as it was lucky, but it was full points regardless, and gave the Yellows something to build on as they prepared for the short and tricky trip to Mangotsfield two days later.

**Tiverton Town:** Ray Johnston; Jak Martin, Chris Vinnicombe, Matt Villis, Nathan Rudge, Tom Gardner, James Palmer, Will Gardner (Glenn Gould 46), Tom Knighton (Chris Young 76), Carl Cliff-Brown, Lewis Irish (Paul Wyatt 58)

Goals: Vinnicombe 53, Wyatt 89, Young 90

Booked: Villis 84

Sent Off: None

**Bedford Town:** Andrew Stevens; Craig Grieve, Shane Brown, Jon Darby, Steve Gentle, Ben Farrell, Rob Miller (Luke Knight 76), Derwayne Stupple, James Hatch (Ian Draycott 25), Mike Lyon, Stuart Sinclair

Booked: None

Sent Off: None

Attendance: 355