

SAUTRDAY, 19 JANUARY 2008

KING'S LYNN 1-1 TIVERTON TOWN

BGB Southern League Premier Division

If games against Mangotsfield are inevitably close then the same can't generally be said when Tiverton travel to The Walks to take on Southern League giants King's Lynn. The previous two trips to the other end of the land have resulted in heavy defeats, most recently last April when the Linnets ripped the Tiverton defence to shreds on a sweltering Sunday afternoon, and won 4-1 despite Scott Laird putting the Yellows ahead early in the game. Since then the Tivvy team has changed almost beyond recognition - the only surviving member of the team that lost to King's Lynn just nine months ago is Tom Gardner. Nathan Rudge was suspended that day, as was Chris Vinnicombe, while Mike Booth remains sidelined.

The early exchanges pointed to a similar scoreline and yet again Tivvy succumbed to the curse of the early goal, dropping into arrears with only six minutes on the clock. Jack Defty exchanged passes with Ben Sedgemoor and delivered a low cross that allowed Mark Camm all the time he needed to stab the ball past Ray Johnston and send the healthy home support of over a thousand into early raptures of delirium. Tiverton struggled to assert any authority on the game and the Linnets would later curse their tardy finishing - more incisiveness would have put the hosts well out of reach before the half time break.

A series of three free kicks on the edge of the Tiverton penalty area bore no reward for the home side, and manager Keith Webb reiterated his intent to bring in more firepower to arrest the stuttering form that has seen King's Lynn drop nine points from the last seven games. Usually Danny Bloomfield is the main threat of the Lynn attack, but with the one gilt-edged chance that came his way against Tivvy he dilly-dallied too long, took a touch too many and was left to rue his indecisiveness as Nathan Rudge scrambled back to change down his shot.

At the other end Scott Howie had taken on the role of spectator for long periods of the game, but was alert enough on a rare break from Tiverton to divert Simon Bochenski's effort away with his legs, and in the second half the experienced glovesman dived bravely at the feet of Radley Veale to deny a certain equaliser. Rudge headed Matty Bye's free kick wide of the upright when it appeared easier to hit the target as Town forced their way into the game, but the introduction of Tom Knighton and Glen Gould didn't initially appear as though it would have the desired effect.

With Lynn still trying to score pretty rather than just score at all Tivvy were living on the edge and only had a blunt home attack to thank that they were still in with a shout, and that shout grew louder as the crowd grew more apprehensive with every passing minute and just a single goal separating the sides. And then the blow that would silence The Walks - fifteen minutes remaining and Bochenski muscled his way into space on the right, lofted in a cross which was met by Gould who had attacked the space and found himself in the perfect position to ram a strike past Howie and into the roof of the net for the equaliser.

Against the run of play, perhaps, but goals count more than chances, and in football you have to make your own luck. By fortune rather than design Tiverton had stayed in touch with their illustrious hosts, and when the opportunity finally presented itself they did what King's Lynn had failed to do on too many occasions to mention. It was Gould's second goal of the season and he will struggle to score a more important one before the current campaign is out. King's Lynn might have extended their unbeaten home run to six matches but that will be of little consolation as three of these have been drawn; Tiverton, meanwhile, are now six games without defeat and amongst the most in-form teams in the league. Tivvy have won at King's Lynn, back in 2002 when a Paul Chenoweth goal separated the sides; if we get the chance to win at The Walks again next season it will be due to the Linnets inability to kill games off when they are on top.

King's Lynn: Scott Howie; Dean West (Matt Nolan 86), Ben Chapman, Mark Warren, Greg Crane, Mark Camm, Michael Frew (Kieran Deane 65), Ben Sedgemoor, Jack Defty, Danny Bloomfield (John Turner 60), Joe Francis

Goals: Camm 6

Booked: None

Sent Off: None

Tiverton Town: Ray Johnston; Danny O'Brien (Will Gardner), Chris Vinnicombe, Daniel Bulley, Nathan Rudge, Tom Gardner, Matt Bye, Chris Young (Tom Knighton 55), Simon Bochenski, James Fraser, Radley Veale (Glenn Gould 55)

Goals: Gould 77

Booked: Vinnicombe 42, Rudge 45

Sent Off: None

Attendance: 1094