

MONDAY, 27 AUGUST 2007

## MANGOTSFIELD UNITED 1-1 TIVERTON TOWN

**BGB Southern League Premier Division**

Mangotsfield United have a good record against Tiverton at Cossham Street and have not lost a league encounter at home to the Yellows since Peter Varley scored the only goal of the game eight years ago. The last meeting between the two teams was a turgid affair that was settled again by a solitary strike, Dave Morrissey ramming one home in the last minute of last season.

If that match back at the end of April was uninspiring and appeared to be heading for a goalless bore-draw then there simply aren't words to describe the first half of this Bank Holiday Monday meeting. It was, simply put, one of the worst games of football that any of the alleged 288 paying spectators have ever seen.

Ray Johnston seemed keen to double his clean sheet tally for the season and his excellent save from John French, diving full length to his right to steer the ball out for a corner was the only high point of an ugly footballing experience. There were other quarter-chances - Alex Ball shot wide for the Mangos, Will Gardner shot very wide for Tivvy, and Luke Ballinger should have done better when he met Alan Griffin's near post cross, but the result was the same - wide of the mark. Chris Young got in on the act too, wide from Chris Vinnicombe's cross, and Griffin's free kick was hit straight at Johnston as the crowd yawned their disapproval and the referee piled on the pain by adding five minutes to the first half.

Games can change with an inspirational team talk, but clearly neither manager pulled anything out of the hat and the second period started in the same inane vein. Nathan Rudge picked up a yellow card and then failed by inches to get a head on Vinnicombe's teasing cross, and even the introduction of Paul Wyatt and Lewis Irish didn't spark the game into life.

And then, just like two days earlier a piece of action not fit for the occasion. Tom Gardner upended Ball 30 yards from goal, marginally to the left of centre as Johnston looked at it. The wall was in place, after a fashion, and the scene was set. Step forward Ellis Wilmot. Step forward he did and he hit the ball as sweetly as you will ever see, straight and true and into the top corner. Johnston didn't see a thing - he probably didn't expect anything to happen after seventy minutes of nothing happening.

As you would expect it was Tivvy that decided they quite fancied a point from the afternoon, and they finally managed to up the pace, pretty much dominating the rest of the game besides a few counter attacks from Mangotsfield. No sooner had the dust settled, and the excitement of Wilmot's wonder-strike been curtailed that Paul Milsom, once a Yellow, gifted the visitors a chance to level things up. Vinnicombe's corner was half cleared, Will Gardner struck a goal bound shot and Milsom palmed the ball to safety. No red card, just a yellow as he protested, and Carl Cliff-Brown kept his nerve to nestle the ball beyond Tony Malessa's left hand from the spot.

Wilmot stuck a second free-kick into the foot of the wall, making his original effort look like beginners luck, and Ball was as lucky as Milsom to stay on the pitch when he scythed down Wyatt who was just about to make a beeline for goal. Wyatt was a long way out which probably saved Ball, and despite the distance Luke Clarke still had a pot-shot from the free kick. The ball sailed wide and the final sequence of the game reverted to back to how the first three-quarters of the match played out. 1-1, not pretty to watch, but a point on the road.

**Mangotsfield United:** Tony Malessa; Neil Arndale (Ellis Wilmot 59), Sam Bailey, Gary Thorne, Paul Milsom, Brian Dutton (Matthew Beadle 59), Alex Ball, Gary Horgan, Alan Griffin (Dave Burborough 46), Luke Ballinger, Jon French

Goals: Wilmot 72

Booked: Milsom 75, Ball 84

Sent Off: None

**Tiverton Town:** Ray Johnston; Luke Clarke, Chris Vinnicombe, Matt Villis, Nathan Rudge, Tom Gardner, James Palmer (Lewis Irish 69), Jak Martin, Chris Young (Paul Wyatt 64), Carl Cliff-Brown, Will Gardner

Goals: Cliff-Brown 75

Booked: Palmer 45, Rudge 53

Sent Off: None

Attendance: 288