

SATURDAY, 15 SEPTEMBER 2007

TIVERTON TOWN 0-3 SHORTWOOD UNITED

FA Cup First Qualifying Round

It's half an eternity since we gathered here at Ladysmead, the last time being that depressing afternoon where we fell out of the FA Cup with little more than a whimper against Shortwood United. The odds were long on an away win, for while Shortwood were having a useful season by their standards they were still two levels below Tiverton in the pyramid, away from home and with no FA Cup pedigree to boast of. But the very ethos of the FA Cup is that smaller teams can beat bigger teams, even on the road, and to be brutally frank Shortwood came, saw and conquered. Indeed, the Wood played with an endearing naivety, a freedom, a carefree approach, and it was this which caught Tivvy off-guard barely before they had a chance to settle into the match.

James Singh was the star of the show, and was already stretching the Town defence, although it was midfielder Michael Green that had the visitors' first sight of goal, curling a long range effort a foot wide of the post after Chris Young had misjudged the bounce of a poor throw-in. Singh himself also found his radar needed fine tuning when he aimed just wide from twelve yards with the Yellows' defence scrambling in vain to clear a teasing corner. With Town consigned to a handful of speculative efforts from well outside the penalty area it was left to the team from Gloucestershire to show their hosts how it's done. Andy Hoskins forced Ray Johnston into a smart save, the corner that followed was cleared only as far as Jon Embling, and his volley from all of thirty-five yards rattled the crossbar with the 'keeper well beaten. But with the ball forced behind again Hoskins rose unchallenged at the near post to head United into a deserved lead, which they held on to almost unthreatened through to the full time whistle.

Shortwood doubled their lead almost immediately when Singh capitalised on a loose ball to drill a shot into the bottom corner, and it wasn't until midway through the second period that Tivvy began to start playing football with purpose. But for all their possession they were faced with a stoic wall of red and white, and victory was assured when Singh grabbed his second of the game, bundling the ball home from close range after it had passed across the face of goal and through a sea of Yellow clad defenders. On another day Tiverton may well have scored a few themselves, and Martin Pearce was forced into a string of excellent saves, denying Nathan Rudge on two occasions and pulling off a sharp stop from Paul Wyatt. It was Shortwood United's day, and they went on to despatch Gloucester City in the next round before finally succumbing to Maidenhead United.

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

Attendance: 375