

Bristol and West (B & W) 4 v Ancient Britons 3

Winterbourne International Academy

Everyone was welcomed to Bristol with tea or coffee and croissants or buns, kindly supplied by Sue and Mervyn Adams. We learnt at this point that skipper Clive Kendall was unable to play due to a nasty injury at work. Fortunately Mike Taylor stepped in at the last minute. Also thanks to Tom Ettling and Patrick Martin for making the long journey from deepest Cornwall.

The first quarter started well with the ABs defence introducing themselves to each other and occasionally passing the ball to each other! The ABs soon got the right channel working with Mike Taylor, Mike Handley and Richard Turner combining well. A quick ball to Paul Sharratt was well received and moved to Richard, back to Mike Handley and then to Paul, who had ghosted into the circle. Unfortunately his snap shot sailed just wide. The left channel of Patrick Martin, Bruce Baron and Russ Gates started to gel and ABs confidence began to grow, but Bristol and West showed intent by forcing the first short corner. Mervyn Adams saved well and Robin Conway calmly cleared the danger. Billy Sedgwick and Bruce tenaciously fought for control in midfield, often against greater numbers, and ABs started to create more attacks. Paul again had possession in the D and his cross found Russ whose first time shot was stopped on the line by a B & W foot. Paul converted the penalty stroke and ABs ended the first quarter 1-0 ahead.

Bruce continued to win key tackles in midfield and combined well with Paul whose return pass to Billy led to the first short corner for the ABs. The B & W keeper stood firm and the chance was lost. More good interplay between Billy & Bruce presented the ball to Paul whose goal-bound shot from a narrow angle looped over the keeper but was cleared off the line by a B & W defender. Tom Ettling took over on the right wing and combined well with Mike Handley and Billy to set up another short corner and the direct shot was easily saved. B & W finished the half strongly moving the ball quickly through midfield and winning 2 short corners which Mervyn saved and Vince Smith tidied up.

B & W changed formation by introducing another player into midfield and ABs were soon on the back foot. B & W won another short corner and a smart move around Mervyn allowed a free shot which Robin neatly stopped one-handed unfortunately not holding his stick! Penalty stroke 1-1. Robin moved further forward to support mid-field and soon found Billy in the circle whose first time shot rattled the backboard to make it 2-1. Bristol & West's large squad and constant player rotations started to make a difference and quick counter-attacking hockey led to a sharp chance which Mervyn saved well. Not to be outdone by

**Robin, Vince decided that the hand stop had been re-introduced after nearly 40 years and did one of his own. Another short corner led to an equaliser, now 2-2.**

**ABs started the final quarter with better interplay and shorter passing and soon created more opportunities, but an intercepted pass at the top of the circle was quickly fired to the other end and the deflected shot and resulting long corner was played around the ABs circle and a short was awarded which B & W converted. ABs were penned into their half for the next 5 minutes but great defending and more saves by Mervyn prevented further goals. ABs gritted their teeth and determined tackling from Tom and neat short passes between Billy, Bruce and Mike Handley lead to more chances and another short corner. This time the ball was moved from Robin to Paul and Paul slotted the ball home to equalise. As the ABs pushed forwards for the winner they were caught on the counter-attack and B & W calmly stroked home goal number 4! The final whistle blew and ABs finished disappointed that they had let it slip, when perhaps they should have held on for a draw. All agreed that it had been a good game of hockey played in the right spirit.**

**Man of the Match: Mervyn Adams**

**Mervyn Adams, Mike Handley, Vince Smith, Patrick Martin, Robin Conway, Billy Sedgwick, Mike Taylor, Russell Gates, Bruce Baron, Tom Ettling, Richard Turner, Paul Sharratt.**

**Supporters: Sue Adams, Angela Castleton, Karen Daly, Alison Baron, Tony Perryman, Dudley Walker & Ann Lewis (+1 Guest).**

**Report courtesy of Mike & Lou Handley.**

**Club Captain's comments:**

**This was a fine competitive game played in the usual excellent spirit. The ABs who had lost several squad players due to injury in the run up to the game performed very well against a large opposition squad which was able to give players rest periods as required. The ABs suffered another setback when Russ Gates sustained a calf injury early in the second half & it was inevitable that tiredness would have an impact against the significantly younger opposition.**

**After match hospitality was enjoyed at the nearby Swan where following the meal Clive Kendall took the opportunity to thank the hosting club for another enjoyable fixture with the ABs looking forward to returning next year. The two Umpires were also thanked for their efforts together with the staff of the Swan.**

**Man of the Match went to Merv Adams who put in a fine performance in goal.**

**Additional thanks go to:**

**Sue & Merv Adams for again producing the pre match goodies.**

**Robin for taking on the duties of Captain on the pitch.**

**Mike Taylor of Stourport HC for stepping in at very short notice to replace the injured skipper.**

**Russ & Tom for maintaining match notes.**

**Bruce for dealing with match finances.**

**Last but not least Mike Handley for producing an excellent match report.**