

Saturday 22nd July 2017

Woking Pitts 5 – Ancient Britons 2

The M25 again slowed ABs down but all eventually arrived (some just after the close of the game!!). The journey through the rain did not bode well and in fact the rain decided to stay for the whole of the game.

Woking began with clear intent and the ABs were immediately on the defensive. It was very clear that here were younger, fitter and faster players as they pressed quickly forward, winning the first of several penalty corners. Fortunately Richard Boutcher was in his England form today and the danger was cleared. Shortly after a further penalty corner was given as Phil Hall used his foot instead of the stick. Yet again ABs survived and cleared the danger. Woking then attacked down the left and Mukesh Phakey (playing for Woking) jinked around the back of our defence and fell whilst trying a tricky reverse stick cross; but got up to continue. Woking then attacked down the left but the winger's cross was blocked by Clive.

After 10 minutes ABs gave away the ball on the halfway line leaving Phil Hall all on his own and a penalty corner was subsequently given. Yet again Richard Boutcher was called upon to repel the barrage.

ABs were losing the battle in midfield as Woking kept intercepting, but a long through ball from Paramjit Hayre to Paul Sharratt but he was outnumbered and lost possession. The whole defence had to work really hard and Phil and Clive were blocking everything as Woking attacked tirelessly. Paramjit Hayre was having the tricky job of marking No 9 (Grog), who seemed to have an on-board motor as he kept switching sides. Just before the quarter finished, a clearance from Paramjit Hayre found Frank Colwill who won a penalty corner. Brian Hopkins injected, Phil Hall stopped then switched right to Paul Woodward, back to Phil, pass left to **Paul Sharratt who clinically finished**. ABs 1 nil up against the run of play. Time to take on water to drink, not from above.

The 2nd quarter began and Woking as ABs were up against it. The whole quarter was basically one sided and midway through the quarter **Woking equalised through Grog Fookes**. Resolute defending by the ABs kept them in the game with fine saves from Richard Boutcher. Just before the quarter ended, ABs won a penalty corner. The routine attempted this time was to go left and a shot from Paul Sharratt was saved by Mervyn Adams, but the ball

stopped just in front of **Frank Colwill, who spun and tapped the ball home.** ABs were back in the lead as the half came to a close.

The 3rd quarter seemed to follow the pattern of the 2nd as Woking kept upping the pressure, having changed their system to a more attacking formation. A long run with swift passing reached the ABs, but Phil managed to cut it out and begin the counter attack. A series of passes unfortunately was intercepted and Woking broke quickly but their final shot went wide. ABs still tried to attack and a good run from Frank Colwill along the by-line saw a pull back to Brian Hopkins but his shot went just wide of the left hand post. This only seemed to spur Woking on even more and Grog forced another great save by Richard Boutcher. More pressure saw ABs conceded more penalty corners but they managed to clear with Paramjit Hayre blocking at the top of the circle. Woking soon equalised as a smart move from the side-line saw a pull back to **Grog who slammed the ball into the far corner,** with Richard having no chance. ABs were having to soak up the pressure as Woking kept winning possession at will and the quarter came to a close with ABs conceding yet another penalty corner, but Woking fluffed it and the final shot went wide.

The final quarter of the Alamo saw the ABs attempting to break free and early possession and pressure from Paul Woodward led to a penalty corner. A change saw the ball out to Paul Sharratt and his stonking shot was just wide. Frank was getting stuck in or was it "stick in" as he harassed the Woking defence. Woking soon cleared the danger and were back in AB territory winning yet another penalty corner, but again the final shot was wide. Woking were now trying to up the speed and pace of the game and No 9 was creating major problems but the final pass was just too quick, even though he dived. As ABs tried to break out from defence and stem the flow, they lost the ball in midfield, but Clive cleared the danger. Unfortunately it wasn't long before the ball was back close to our circle, but fortunately we had Richard Boutcher, who comfortably saved and Paul Woodward then cleared the danger. SAGA came back again and a noisy sound of sticks gave them a penalty corner, which was initially saved but **Rowland Belcher netted the rebound to take the lead.** ABs were not prepared to give up the battle and Paul Woodward drifted upfield and tried to find Paul Sharratt but SAGA intercepted. They immediately attacked and in the melee Brian Hopkins was floored, but thankfully able to continue. More danger followed but Richard Boutcher cleared the ball wide and to safety. SAGA just increased the pressure and after winning another

penalty corner managed to find the net and **increased their lead via Mark Robinson**. ABs still refused to give in and a pass to Frank Colwill was calmly controlled, followed by a flighted pass into the circle over all defenders. What a decision to make – for Paul Sharratt, control or shoot. He took the latter and sadly the shot went wide. Almost immediately ABs were back on the defensive and they conceded another penalty corner, but this time the shot went wide. SAGA wouldn't be denied and won a further penalty corner just as the Umpire blew the final whistle. All SAGA players came up to the edge of the circle. The initial shot was saved, the rebound was fired back in and Phil Hall cleared off the line, only for new AB recruit **Steve Russell to tap it home for a 5-2 victory**.

What an enjoyable game of hockey and Yes, ABs were a little outplayed, but against a younger side they did not disgrace themselves. A special mention has to be made of the save by Mervyn Adams as he flicked the ball wide with his right foot, whilst falling backwards – **EXCELLENT MERVYN**.

Firstly I would like to apologise for incorrectly naming the Man of the Match nominated by the Ladies. It should have been Richard Boutcher (& also a mention for Phil Hall). I also chose Paramjit Hayre for special mention having chased Grog around the pitch for 70 minutes.

Authors – Sukhdev Dhesi, Richard Turner and Diane Boutcher.

Richard Boutcher, Phil Hall, Clive Kendall, Russell Gates, Paramjit Hayre, Paul Woodward, Richard Turner, Brian Hopkins, Frank Colwill, Paul Sharratt, Sukhdev Dhesi and Jon Beale.

Man of the Match: Richard Boutcher (& Phil Hall) + Paramjit Hayre.

Supporters: Sue Adams (as Mervyn playing for Woking), Diane Boutcher, Sandie Hall, Jackie Colwill, Jashinder Hayre, Karen Daly, Hazel Hopkins, Angela Castleton, Jackie Woodward, Ann Lewis & Dudley Walker.

Thanks are also due to the following:

Woking Pitts & their captain Joe Dunne for again hosting this enjoyable annual fixture. Jon Beale for dealing with Match & Party monies.

The two Umpires, Graham Reynolds from the ABs and Martin Ellis provided by Woking.

John Peirce for organizing & hosting the evening party much enjoyed by a number of AB & Woking members. Mukesh & Neeru Phakey for the provision of a curry.

Those who kindly "Put up" ABs.

