

4th October U12 Leeds v Derby SFA

The weather may have taken a turn for the worse this weekend but the U12 Leeds football team brought some sparkle to a miserable Saturday morning with an impressive 6-0 win over Derby.

Unlike many games last season, Leeds were quick off the mark against a Derby team who had three players on the pitch who were taller than most of the parents on the touchline. Within the first two minutes a swift passing move involving Ellis Wilson-Gales resulted in a Taylor Ragan cross which Haroon Bostan scored from. 1-0!

Derby recovered quickly from the early goal and Jake Donahue was called into action to make an excellent double save when the enormous Derby number 17 broke through the Leeds defence, and the same player also forced a good interception from Harrison Batty.

The home team continued to play some fluid passing football, and a break from Ragan on the left led to a pass through to Jarvis who chipped the ball just beyond the keeper's fingertips, and Haroon headed in at the far post just to make sure – 2-0 and Jarvis will probably claim that as his.

A scrappy period of play followed but after a few minutes Leeds extended their lead even further. A Derby free kick was well-cleared and the ball fell to Matty Webb, whose pass out of midfield found Wilson-Gales, who passed to Haroon who scored his second and Leeds' third.

Derby didn't give up despite the score line, and Tom Woodeson, Batty and Oliver Brown all had to work hard to clear the ball away from the Derby man mountain. When they won the ball back, Leeds' passing moves were excellent, and lovely link up play from Woodeson and Wilson-Gale down the right saw a Webb shot go just wide.

As the first third came to an end, Derby broke from midfield, Batty tackled the Derby number 17 brilliantly, the ball flew up in the air and Donahue made an excellent save to push the ball over the bar.

In the second sector, Jack White and Liam Dean replaced Webb and Barker, and both soon made an impact on the score line. Woodeson passed to Bostan who passed to Jack White who scored in the bottom corner. Within minutes Dean had also got on the score sheet after great play from Brown and Wilson-Gale. 5-0 to Leeds against a team described in the programme as a something of a bogey team.

The Derby team had undergone substantial changes at the start of this period, and the new (much smaller) players struggled to keep up with Leeds' fast-paced passing game. Ragan had an excellent twenty minutes and was unlucky not to score against the Derby keeper who made several good saves. Haroon and Wilson-Gales also had a couple of good chances each, and a Jack White shot was spilled by the keeper who then scrambled to claim back the ball to prevent another Leeds goal.

When Webb replaced Wilson-Gales the pacey attacking moves continued with a strong break down the right which the Derby number 41 (reflecting the size of their considerable squad) did well to clear for a corner. Derby's only real attack came from their nimble-looking number 37, but Brown tackled well to stop him from breaking clear to score.

As the second third came to an end Liam Dean scored the best goal of the game, a quick exchange of passes with Webb leading to a fantastic shot in the top left-hand corner.

Derby were the only team to make changes at the start of the final third of the game as they brought on their more dangerous (big) players, but the momentum stayed with Leeds. Ragan and Bostan had shots saved by the Derby keeper in the first few minutes of the sector and Woodeson fired over the bar. Barker and Wilson-Gales then replaced Bostan and Ragan, and Barker was unlucky not to score when a goal kick came straight to him but he volleyed it over the bar.

After a tricky few weeks of injury, it was fantastic to see Jack Backhouse come on for the last ten minutes of the game and he soon got into the action, working hard with Brown to close down the Derby 17. Leeds continued to attack, with Wilson-Gales and White hitting the bar, Dean shooting just wide and another Leeds attacking move from Webb and Wilson-Gales resulting in the ball sitting on the roof of the net. Despite the pressure the score stayed at 6-0 (as far as I could count – there were touchline rumours that it was 7 or even 8-0) and the coaches and supporters were delighted with an excellent all-round team performance