

Saturday 14th January 2017 V Sheffield Schools in a friendly.

Before the match report commences I'd like to take the opportunity to wish Zach a speedy recovery as it seems his injury is quite serious and could keep him out of the picture until April at the earliest. We should also wish Ian well with his continued trials at Leeds United which prevent him from playing for the City Boys. The line up for the first period against the 'old foe' saw Charlie, Jake and Russell warming the bench. It was nice to see Harvey welcomed into the team as several players exchanged high fives and handshakes on the pitch before kick off and a real 'Man-hug' was shared between Harvey and Sam. Sheffield Schools were out of the blocks quickly and were not 0-1 in front within seconds courtesy of a lofted shot from the corner of the box. This seemed to light a fuse for Leeds who looked for an instant response and poured forward with intent but they could not capitalise from the shot or the resulting corner. A nice ball into the mix from Jack towards Jamie won another corner for Leeds but the Sheffield keeper took it comfortably. As Sheffield broke Alfie and Sam tidied up well although a slide rule pass soon after split the Leeds defence but Harvey was not troubled by the soft shot. A ball from Brad P released Jamie who shrugged off the defenders challenge but the keeper held his shot. Neither team was in control at this stage and Leo was next to be denied when the keeper dived at his feet then Brad W had a tame shot and Alfie lashed one just wide. There followed a couple of solid tackles by Sam to stifle Sheffield's forward movement and then Alfie did the same. Soon Max was tidying up from the right back berth and striding out with confidence. The game was swinging end to end but little action was occurring in either box. Jamie did then get an opportunity but he snatched at the shot with space beckoning in front of him. Jamie then won his team a free kick as it seemed apparent the Sheffield defence had been instructed to keep tight on the Leeds danger man. It was still switching from side to side but Sheffield seemed to be winning the midfield as an injury to Jack saw him replaced by Charlie. Max played Jamie in who passed to Brad W and his curling shot with the outside of his right boot was the final action of the first period. A fairly even affair with Leeds perhaps having had more shots but not the stat that mattered. 0-1 Sheffield. Jake, Jack and Russell stayed on the bench for the start of period 2. There was plenty of forward movement by Leeds in the early stages but no shots were deployed. Charlie was adding a bit of bite to the Leeds midfield and he set Jamie away Harvey then made an excellent point blank save when the Sheffield man really should have scored. A fantastic cross field ball from a Max found Jamie in the box and although he had two stabs at goal he couldn't make either count.

Back at the Leeds end Harvey saved well once more before Brad W was denied for Leeds by the Sheffield keeper. Sheffield were defending really well as Leeds were starting to win the midfield battles, unfortunately the final ball didn't always have the quality required. A Sheffield breakaway was well saved by Harvey which came after some great interplay from Leo and Charlie. A quick burst from Brad P ensued and he pulled back a ball for an unmarked Brad W who scuffed his shot and Jamie somehow did the same when the loose ball made its way to him. Leeds really needed to make the pressure tell and Coach Olly switched Brad P for Russell.

Harvey then made a world class save. He'd been the busier keeper despite Leeds creating more opportunities... ..from the resultant corner Sheffield won the header to make it 0-2 against the run of play. Jake replaced Brad W and his first touch was a pass that set away Russell who won a corner as the crowd were hoping for a goal. Alfie then spared Sam's blushes after a defensive slip. Back at the right end and Jamie saw a heavy touch win a corner after strong work by Russell. Unfortunately Leeds couldn't make it count. Another half shot had the Sheffield keeper more worried by the sun before Russell put through another ball that Leeds couldn't capitalise on. It was still end to end with Alfie, Max and Sam doing well as the whistle blew to end the second period.

For the final period Brad W, Brad P and Leo were sitting out. A strong start was played out in the middle of the pitch. A burst from Russell and Jake was quickly shut down before Sam made a couple of great tackles at the back for Leeds. Sheffield won a corner as Leeds were caught upfield trying to get something out of the game. It'd be a real boost if they could as Sheffield don't concede many. The next attack came from Sheffield but Sam was strong again. Jack was having an industrious spell and Max was trying to conduct the flow of the game but it was proving difficult from right back. Passes were starting to go astray as Sheffield found a way through and hit the Leeds post. Charlie then sprayed a ball wide to Russell who's shot-cum-cross hit the bar. The game was becoming scrappy as Leeds searched out a route towards goal and the Sheffield keeper saved at a Jamie's feet before another shot from Jamie fizzed wide. The final few minutes were being played predominantly in the Sheffield half but the scoring opportunities were limited against a very well organised team. Charlie was involved in most things and some pinball with Jamie, Jack, Russell and Jake couldn't pay dividends before Sheffield broke and shot wide as the game came to a close.