

Saturday 17th December 2016 Home to Blackpool in a friendly.

Brad Wood, Brad Pride, Jack Clarke, Ben Littlewood, Jamie Broadbent, Max Pearson, Russell Djitieu, Sam Wells, Charlie Tokarski, Jake Myers, Alfie Wright and Olly Pryszczyk and Harvey Coleman, last years U11s keeper drafted in.

Blackpool were first on the attack with a shot that was wide of the target although it seemed that Leeds had a game plan early on. On three occasions they tried to exploit the pace of Jamie but to no avail before a sweeping by Blackpool saw Leeds thankful for the proverbial linesman's flag. Jamie did then break away and a shot via a deft flick with the outside of his right boot earned Leeds a corner. Coach Olly was imploring his team to speed up and not be second to every ball as Sam was called upon to make a couple of good tackles and Harvey made his first save of the game before then calmly collecting another shot from distance.

The game was mostly being fought in midfield and a Jamie pounced on a slip by Blackpool before running half the length of the pitch, rounding the keeper and coolly sticking the ball home for 1-0 to Leeds. Sam made another good tackle to concede a corner which flew across the face of the Leeds goal and harmlessly away.

Alfie picked up a loose ball and had a shot from distance which was blocked. He picked up the ball again and whipped in a cross that Jamie found with his head but he couldn't find the necessary accuracy. Back at the Leeds goal mouth Sam made a couple of good block tackles and Harvey brought a great save out of his locker as he plucked the ball out from under his bar before Brad P set Jamie away but on this occasion the keeper thwarted him. Play swung and Alfie did just enough to unsettle the Blackpool forward who shot wide.

Another run for Jamie found Brad P in space but the ball eluded him and Jack couldn't put away the loose ball. Blackpool moved forward and created space around Ben in the box but somehow the striker hit it over from point blank range with Harvey in close attendance. Russell then found himself with time to find Brad P but alas his shot was wide of the mark. It was to be the last action of the period as the whistle blew to signal the end of a good period for Leeds with Max being the driving force in midfield for Leeds but in truth a little more endeavour will be required against this Blackpool team.

At the start of the second period there were no immediate substitutions and a steady start was had by both teams with most of the play taking part in a congested midfield and no notable passages of play. A lovely move involving Ben, Jack and Alfie nearly had Jamie bearing down on goal but Blackpool were resolute in defence. Max had dropped a little deeper in this period and was proving to be a good barrier in front of his defence, a defence that Sam was bossing at centre half. A ball from Sam had Russell scurrying away but a good tackle stopped him in his tracks. Jack then set up Russell but the lively wide man couldn't get a shot away.

Leeds were becoming the better team as the game wore on although Harvey was called into action making a comfortable save following a long range Blackpool free kick. Leeds then broke away to make it 2-0 as Jamie galloped forward and once more rounded the keeper. He was close to a third moments later with a blistering shot that warmed the keepers hands. Russell then laid off a ball to Brad P in the box and his shot just trickled past a diving keeper and wide of the post.

A great pass from Blackpool then dissected the Leeds defence but Ben made a magnificent tackle in the box to concede a corner before Max made a good tackle of his own and cleared to Russell who released Jamie but there was to be no end result and Jack then blazed over from distance. Russell was next to sting the keepers hands and win his team a corner and he was soon in action again with a well timed tackle to pass back to Harvey before Jamie once again tested the Blackpool keeper.

Ben made a series of good tackles to keep his team on the ascendancy before Brad P set up Jamie for his hat-trick and 3-0 to Leeds. The whistle then brought down the curtain on what had been a good period for a Leeds.

A bright start saw Jamie poke the ball through to Brad W but his shot was off target before Blackpool sped away and flashed a shot across the Leeds goal mouth. Brad W chipped a ball through to Jamie and the Blackpool keeper made a fortunate save before the ball was soon down the Leeds end and Sam was busy shepherding the Blackpool forward wide. Some pinball defending from Leeds followed but it eventually led to Max giving Brad W the ball who in turn gave it to Jamie who hit a beautiful shot that was just a fraction too high. Leeds went forward again and a melee in the box resulted in Jack hitting the post. A superb ball from Jamie allowed Olly P to get free in the box but an excellent last minute tackle stopped him from releasing the trigger.

Blackpool then pulled back a goal with a shot-cum-cross from out wide in the left which just evaded Harvey's grasp, although in mitigation he was looking right into the winter sun from that angle. It was 3-2 moments later as Blackpool hit the post and with Harvey grounded they slotted home the rebound. The resurgence seemed to have come from nowhere as Leeds had been the better side. Brad W had a chance in the box but as he looked to find a teammate the support was not forthcoming and the chance disappeared. Charlie was battling well for his team and he took a knock in a crunching tackle which resulted in the Blackpool player having to leave the arena. Jamie then restored parity as he once again ran through following a pass from Sam and more rounded the keeper to make it Jamie 4 Blackpool 2 (although to be fair it'd been a real team effort). Jake then had a run and found his forward in the shape of Olly P but his shot was tame before Harvey was called upon to make a steady save.

....in a shock twist the referee then announced that Leeds had requested a fourth period be played as Blackpool had travelled a fair distance to play. There were no team changes for the 'bonus' period and Leeds started with some lovely triangular play but the first shot was to be Blackpool's although Harvey was more than equal to the task. Ben then made a great headed clearance whilst at the other end Jamie forced the Blackpool keeper to save with his feet. Ben then lobbed a steady ball into the mix and Brad W hit it narrowly wide. Blackpool then moved forward but they too shot wide across a diving Harvey.

Max then made two defensive clearances, both with his head before Olly P and Brad W combined well around the Blackpool box but they couldn't find the room to get a shot away before Jake tried from the edge of the box but there were too many bodies in the way. The Leeds defence were then guilty of backing off as Blackpool poured forward but their shot was disappointing given the time and space available. Leeds won a free kick on the edge of the area as Brad W was bundled over and it was he who stepped up although his shot was straight at the wall and his follow up was high, wide and handsome.

It was soon 5-2 however as Jamie was released and with the goal at his mercy he unselfishly squared the ball for Olly P to fire home from the edge of the six yard box. Max was working hard in the left back berth once again and Jack alongside Charlie were industrious in midfield whilst Ben was also full of endeavour. Sam had been superb at the back and Harvey was clearly enjoying his day as he made a couple more saves and was very much in command of his area both physically and verbally whilst the Leeds forward line looked a constant menace.

Back at the Leeds goalmouth Sam deflected a shot over and Blackpool were unlucky with a header from the resultant corner. Olly P hit a ball forward to Jamie but the keeper saved well. Harvey then made a superb save from close range and Max tidied up before the whistle brought an end to proceedings and a well earned 5-2 victory for Leeds.

Well done boys on bringing the year to a close on a high. Enjoy your Christmas break, go easy on the chocolates and allow your parents a lie in on Christmas Day as after all they get up every Saturday and Sunday to allow you to follow your dreams.

Stay safe and keep lucky.