ESFA NATIONAL CUP Leeds SFA U13 v Vale of White Horse 25.03.23

After beating Liverpool and Barnsley in previous rounds, Leeds Schools FA U13s continued their English Schools FA Champions Cup run with the visit of Vale of White Horse (Oxford) in the semi-final on Saturday.

Oxford took the lead with a well worked goal on ten minutes but as Leeds started to exert some authority on the game, striker Kishan Dass seized on a poor back pass and tucked home to make it 1-1 at half time.

Leeds had a strong start to the second half and looked particularly dangerous from set pieces. Jake Allenby swung in a corner that was heading into the goal, forcing the 'keeper to palm it into a dangerous area where Oliver Ahmetaj poked home from close range. Leeds almost had a third when Ralph Kilbride forced a great save from the Oxford 'keeper and Leeds own 'keeper Corey Stafford made some excellent saves which looked to be enough for Leeds to hold on, only for Oxford to finally force an equaliser with the last kick of normal time.

This seemed to have knocked the Leeds boys and they conceded again in the first period of extra time to make it 2-3, but a dramatic finish saw Allenby send in another sumptuous set piece, this time a free kick from the left, which Levi Zari was able to finish from six yards to send the game to penalties.

The shoot-out was nervy, with both 'keepers saving two of the five penalties to send it to sudden death. Leeds captain Rufus Scott then slotted home to the 'keepers right and when Leeds stopper Stafford made his third save Leeds could finally celebrate a place in the final against Brighton at Stoke City's stadium in a month's time.