

1st X1 - Forest 4 Aldenham 3

In an entertaining game for the neutrals, an under strength 1st X1 side nearly took a share of the spoils after a great late comeback. Having been 4-1 down with 20 minutes to go only the width of a post and a strange (or very bad) refereeing decision denied Aldenham the draw. 3 goals in 5 first half minutes had given forest what seemed an unassailable half time lead, but a spirited fight back started when Bennison finished expertly from a Lench through ball. Forest quickly hit back to again secure a 3 goal lead before a dramatic late finale. A Lench penalty, after Bennison was brought down and a 3rd from Theocheris, again set up by Lench, saw a final onslaught of the Forest goal to find a deserved equaliser. With just seconds remaining Bennison looked as if he was to become the hero before being denied by a late tackle that, in typical football style only the ref, of the now 50 strong crowd, thought was not a penalty. It was harsh on the 1st X1 who were missing 7 players through injury on the day. Praise must go to Toby Bayley and Julian Linnemann who forged a new centre back pairing just seconds before the kick off when Hall failed a late fitness test. With neither having played the position before and at least 3 others playing with injuries it was a credit to the boys for their performance. It's not often you take much from a defeat but today was certainly a day to hold heads high despite the result.

MOM – Bayley – had he really never played centre back before? Outstanding.

2nd X1 - Away vs Forest – Lost 0-2 (0-1)

With 2 players drafted in from the 3rd XI and Matt Goodfield carrying an ankle injury, we didn't travel to NE London with much confidence, and a full strength team could certainly have returned with a result. In fact Rishi Batra and Nils Heyer both had very good games – if only they had been forwards rather than full-backs! Over the duration of the game we defended effectively but conceded one in each half – one bundled in from a corner and one a speculative shot through a bunch of players. Unfortunately we didn't make the most of the ball once we crossed the half way line, so the Forest goalkeeper was rarely stretched. Man of the match – Cemal Combat – a massive performance at the centre of defence against a whole variety of strikers.

3rd X1 – Aldenham 1 Forest 3

Starting with just eleven players and no subs meant that the team had to work hard throughout and keep up the momentum. For the first 20 minutes the teams were evenly matched but it is fair to say that Forest had more opportunities to attack our goal. We missed our play maker Rishi Batra in midfield (promoted to the 2nds for this fixture). However Leschner worked hard in central midfield together with newcomer E. Seramaga. The back four worked well together and it was unfortunate that the first Forest goal came from a lucky touch to a corner ball. Aldenham continued to battle well for the remainder of the first half.

The second half had barely started before a well coordinated move from the Forest midfield and strikers caught us out and led to their second goal. Aldenham replied shortly after with an excellent opportunistic goal from Alex Evelegh after their keeper fumbled the ball. Aldenham were now more fired up but within ten minutes Forest completed a hat-trick when an accurate ball was threaded through for their main striker.

MOM - A. Everlegh.

Was it Henry VIII or Bill Shankley who said lose your head lose the game? Whoever it was could be commenting on the U16 team team v Forest. They were slightly better in terms of ball control and nous but we had the beating of them with a little more self control. For the record Luke Robertson scored the goal in the second half which we won 1-0 after a three nil lose in the first half. Bradley Dark made some great saves inspiring memories of Jim Montgomery in the 72 cup final and Josh Kalms made an excellent debut. They secured joint MOM

U15A – Forest 2 Aldenham 1

Same old story from me. We lost a competitive game that could have gone either way and should really have been a draw. We largely controlled the first half, although gifted them the first goal after Jack Gibbons spilled the ball straight to their striker for a tap in. After missing some great chances, we got a deserved equaliser when Michael Shores struck a great effort into the roof of the net. The second half was a scrappy affair and a defensive mistake allowed Forest to steal the ball on the edge of the box and beat Jack Gibbons with a great strike into the corner of the net. The boys continue to play well, yet are unable to get the victories that their efforts deserve.

U15B - lost 4-0.

Once again, the golden boys were left empty-handed after a game in which the score line vastly flattered the home team.

In a competitive but fairly fought game, neither side could break down each other's opposition, and Aldenham's back four were particularly impressive in repelling some constant pressure from Forest. Buckley-Davies had a fine game at right back, shifting over from his central position, which enabled Allegretti to take his place and prove that he is a worthy contender for a position in the starting XI.

Shortly after the first quarter of the game had elapsed, Browne and James were brought on, and the home team immediately scored. Browne coming on, however, almost proved to be an inspired substitution as he ran from deep in the heart of midfield to take a shot on goal, which was parried by the keeper. For this effort alone, he was rewarded Man of the Match. As half time neared, Freeman-King, Unal and Stowell all blasted over, possibly due to the suspiciously light ball.

After the restart, it was Aldenham who dominated possession. They were nearly rewarded for their efforts halfway through the second period when Unal hammered the ball against the crossbar and the rebound was knocked safely wide by a Forest defender. This was to be the away team's last serious attempt in the match as a couple of soft goals were conceded in as many minutes. On the large pitch, legs began to tire rapidly and a late breakaway goal sealed the victory for the home team.

Again, there were plenty of positives to report. Milligan in goal is growing in confidence with every match played and in no way could be blamed for any of the goals. The players are getting used to utilising the full width of the pitch and are being more inventive in moving the ball up the field. Further training sessions will need to address the inevitable weaknesses of a lack of firepower (and an apparent unwillingness to shoot!) and ensuring that all players remain onside for the entire game.

U14 L3-1

The U14A's lost 3-1 to a strong Forest team with an excellent spine of players that we found it difficult to get through. An inability of the defence to clear the ball effectively cost us all 3 goals we conceded. Mac Keating equalised after 20 minutes to make it 1-1 and for 10 minutes it looked as if we could go on and win the game. Then 4 missed clearance attempts by various defenders and a keeper error saw a soft second goal conceded in the second half. We allowed ourselves to be a bit intimidated by players who were hungrier for the ball and who consistently won the 50-50 challenges. Having said all this the overall feeling from the first half of term is positive and the potential is certainly there. Davis, Keating, Holden, Tyrell and Bryer have been the most impressive to date. Bring on Eton away!!

U14 B lost 10-0

We held Forest for 10 mins. And then it began.

Unfortunately for the boys they came up against the strongest team we have played so far. Although two of our defenders tried valiantly to keep them out, it was something akin to the Spartans defending the pass at Thermopylae. It was only ever going to end one way. On far too many occasions we decided that 50/50 balls should be graciously conceded to the opposition. In addition, it appears that heading a football is definitely not 'de rigueur' for the majority of our boys.

However, bucking this trend and, therefore, deserving of a mention in dispatches were Adam Rees, Jesse Wimms and Ed Baldwin. Sells also tried his hardest in goal but sheer volume of shots was always going to tell eventually.

The score line does not reflect the improvement the boys have made since the start of the season. There were times during the match when the general shape of the team and the boys organisation in terms of positional play was fairly solid. Our defence is now working a reasonable line and some exciting moves did begin to develop down the wings. I am confident that a victory is coming. Roll on Salamis!