

## **Men's Football 1<sup>st</sup> Team**

### **League match vs Bournemouth & Poole College**

#### **Title edges closer to Hall Place**

After a couple of disappointing recent results, BCA made amends on Wednesday with a great performance to edge closer to the league title. Last Wednesday BCA were unlucky to lose in the South-East Cup Semi-Final, and on Saturday they came even closer to glory in the BCA Sevens tournament. Due to a heavy load of key skills marking over the past few days no report has been written on the sevens, but basically what happened was BCA played very well throughout the whole tournament and progressed through to the final, where they faced Hadlow College. BCA had beaten Hadlow 4-0 in the group stages, and went into the final with probably too much confidence. Hadlow were vastly improved from the earlier rounds, and found BCA in unusually lazy form. BCA got turned over 2-1, and although a runners-up shield is a respectable result, it was disappointing after high hopes of victory.

So with the hopes of a treble well and truly gone, BCA had to focus on the league to ensure they brought home some silverware this season. Sitting top of the league and undefeated, and with Bournemouth in second place, this game was potentially going to be the title decider. Manager Childs demanded a reaction after the results of the past week, and the lads responded with a memorable display.

The day began well with DJ Dexter and MC Croucher performing well in the minibus. Modern technology enabled them to connect various Ipods and Blackberries to the minibus music system so the team could enjoy some classic tracks from artists such as the Lighthouse Family, Mike and the Mechanics and the Jackson Five. This lifted spirits immensely, and after the 2 hour journey the lads arrived ready to go.

Some changes were enforced as BCA veteran Alex Gale was injured from sevens, Paul Wickens had to work and Tim Sandwell declared himself unfit (as in fat and unhealthy, not injured). This presented an opportunity for Eddie Craft to make his 1<sup>st</sup> team debut, going straight in at right back, as well as

starts for egg-chaser Dean Rogers in right midfield and Nathan Croucher in centre midfield.

BCA started playing into a strong sun, but with an even stronger wind behind them, and they wasted no time in putting Bournemouth under pressure. The seaside students were clearly up for the game, but BCA showed a lot of hunger and hard work and went ahead in the first 5 minutes. Pressure from Craft forced the ball to captain Dexter about 25 yards out and he took a shot which took a wicked deflection and looped over the keeper into the corner. Dexter claims it would have gone in without the deflection, but that's a load of rubbish – it was a lucky goal but no more than BCA deserved.

BCA continued to play well and doubled their lead 10 minutes later with an even more ridiculous goal. Keeper Rob Nicholas hoofed the ball from his own box right up the pitch with the strong wind behind him. Jack Trimble, about 30 yards from goal, managed to get his head on the ball to flick it on but with no one running onto it. The keeper came rushing out to claim the ball but, unbelievably, ran a bit too far and was deceived by the wind and the hard pitch – the ball bounced straight over him and into the goal.

The wind and the bouncy pitch caused problems and frustrated both sides, but BCA adapted best to the conditions and dominated the first half. After 30 minutes they were 3-0 up. A long throw from Dean 'the Arm' Rogers evaded everyone and Luke Dexter latched onto it at the near post. He brushed off a challenge from the defender and lobbed the ball neatly over the keeper before running off celebrating. After scoring 2 goals Dexter still felt the need to cause more fuss and a couple of light challenges saw him rolling around calling for his mum. BCA continued to play well but a lack of concentration let Bournemouth back into the game. After Nicholas saved smartly, BCA couldn't clear the rebound and the ball ricocheted around the box before finding its way to a striker who slotted it into the bottom corner.

The first half was nearly over but there was still time for Dexter to go down injured yet again. This time he hobbled off with an ankle injury, and as he sat at the side of the pitch feeling sorry for himself manager Childs chucked a water bottle in his direction to aid his recovery. Unfortunately the water bottle landed right on his injured ankle, cue more dramatics from the BCA captain.

Half-time arrived with BCA 3-1 up thanks to an outstanding first half display, but with the strong wind against them in the second half the Green Army had to dig in to secure the win. They needn't have worried as they continued their good work. The first 10 minutes of the second period was fairly even until Jack Trimble restored the 3 goal advantage with a superb solo effort, picking the ball up wide on the left before beating a player and driving in towards goal, then rounding the keeper and tapping into the empty net.

Ben Bradley and Matt Tatum came on in the second half and put in solid performances, and the defence continued to look solid whenever they were tested. In goal Rob Nicholas has a great game, claiming numerous crosses and commanding his area well. However, he couldn't do anything to keep out a header midway through the second half. As Bournemouth swung in a dangerous free kick, defender Alex Littlejohn stretched to get his head on the ball, and placed it superbly into his own net. It was a header worthy of Wayne Rooney, but unfortunately it was in the wrong goal and Bournemouth looked like they might creep back into the game.

Their hopes were dashed just minutes later though as excellent work from Bradley saw him brought down and the ref had no option other than to point to the spot. Callum McCarrol stepped up and scored easily. It was 5-2 with about 20 minutes left and BCA were looking good.

The worst shot of the day went to Ben Bradley, whose shot from the penalty spot was sliced so much that it went off for a throw on. Shortly after that Croucher almost made it 6 but his shot came back off the underside of the bar.

The game ran on and BCA had an answer for everything Bournemouth threw at them. One great move in the last few minutes saw Trimble, McCarrol and Dexter play a series of one-twos in an unbelievable move all the way from their own box into the opponent's box, but the keeper saved what would have been goal of the decade.

The game ended and BCA celebrated a vital victory which leaves them 6 points clear at the top of the league. They aren't home and dry yet, but a great performance has left them in a very strong position.