

VAUXHALL LEAGUE 0 F.A. XI 4

The last of the four F.A. Representative games this season, used as trials for the England semi-professional team, took place at Kingstonian's Kingsmeadow stadium on Wednesday, 23rd January. The match was of special interest to Wycombe Wanderers as three of our players took part in the game. Mark West and Dave Carroll, who both played the whole game, and Andy Kerr who came on at half time, all had excellent games and Mark in particular gave an outstanding performance, scoring a goal and holding and laying off the ball to great effect. It was therefore a great disappointment when Tony Jennings's squad for the Wales game at Stafford on February 12th was announced the following day without any players from this club. It has since been disclosed that Mark is the first reserve for the forward positions but this player in particular must wonder what else he could have done to get into the squad.

The game was played on a cold night in front of a few hundred spectators, many of whom were managers and scouts, and a sizeable contingent made the trip from Wycombe. Kingstonian's recently opened stadium (which is very similar to Aylesbury's) had, last season one of the best playing surfaces in non-League football. This season the pitch is rather bare and afterwards the players complained of a number of holes in the surface. The VFL played a 4-4-2 formation but the FA adopted a 4-3-3 line up with West and Evans together again and Andrew Clarke pushed well forward on the left wing. Dave Carroll was in his usual wide right midfield position. The early play saw the Vauxhall side mount several dangerous attacks with Dwight Marshall of Grays heading just wide and Conrad Kane of Carshalton having a fierce shot deflected for a corner. These two forwards would impress throughout the game. As expected West and Evans were combining well and with the FA's first chance, Evans nodded on a corner to West who, with his back to the goal near the penalty spot, neatly turned his man and shot under the diving Paul Hyde. Dave Carroll put over one of many excellent crosses to Evans after 33 minutes and the resultant shot was well saved. By now Clarke's electric pace and close control was giving right back Eddie Martin many problems although the Barnet winger's good work was sometimes undone by a poor final ball or lack of vision. He did, however, have two shots well saved just before the break, the last one after good work by Mark West.

For the second half the FA made five substitutions with Andy Kerr coming on for Mark Hone while the VFL side initially made three changes. Once again the "home" side produced the first chance with Kane's run down the right wing producing a dangerous cross, skimming across the goalmouth.

Terry Robbins, on for Evans, shot just over soon after but on 51 minutes the same player headed home a Dave Carroll near post cross for number two. Six minutes later Steve Thompson of Slough sent a long pass to Robbins whose blocked shot fell to Clarke to steer home the third goal. By now the FA were well in command with Andy Kerr commanding at the back and the West-Carroll-Thompson triangle on the right of front particularly effective. Thompson gave another of his impressive performances and his absence from the England squad was another mystery. The VFL side, however, refused to lie down, and after Kane had shot just wide Steve Lambert actually hit the post. On 67 minutes West laid off a ball to Carroll who hit a superb through ball to Thompson who would have been clean through but for some slack ball control. Clarke on the left wing was by now doing as he pleased and in the space of a minute had two cracking shots just wide and over. The FA's fourth goal came after 74 minutes from an unfortunate Paul Watts own goal after a Thompson shot. The rest of the game was uneventful apart from Pape dropping a corner with the resultant shot blocked, and then a minute later Kane, for once, evaded Kerr's challenge on the right wing and sent over an accurate cross to Lambert who flicked just wide.

In the end it was an easy victory for a talented FA side but the Vauxhall players contributed enormously to an entertaining game. Apart from Kane and Marshall for the VFL, Lambert of Aylesbury perhaps did not quite live up to the recent £100,000 bid by Ipswich (since turned down) and David Lay of Marlow showed the effects of playing a full game the previous evening and found it hard to get to grips with the pace of the game.

VAUXHALL LEAGUE

Manager: Trevor Gould (Aylesbury United)

Team: Paul Hyde (Hayes), Eddie Martin (Dagenham) Paul Watts (Redbridge F), Andy Dear (Kingstonian) Tony Pamphlett (Redbridge Forest), Ian Brown (Grays A) David Lay (Marlow), Dwight Marshall (Grays A) Conrad Kane (Carshalton A), Andy Hesselthaler (Redbridge Forest) Steve Lambert (Aylesbury U).

Subs: Gary Westwood (Wokingham T) for Hyde, 45 mins, Paul Gbogidi (Kingstonian) for Brown, 45 mins, Jon Warden (Carshalton A) for Lay, 45 mins, Bobby Purser (Wokingham T) for Marshall, 68 mins, Chris Walton (Hayes) for Purser, 86 mins.

F.A.XI

Manager: Barry Fry (Barnet)

Team: Gary Phillips (Barnet), Paul Wilson (Barnet), Duncan Horton (Welling U), Mark Hone (Welling U), Steve Connor (Redbridge Forest), Paul Rogers (Sutton U), Dave Carroll (Wycombe Wanderers), Andrew Clarke (Barnet), Mark West (Wycombe Wanderers), Nicky Evans (Barnet), Phil Handford (Welling U).

Subs: (all 45 mins): Richard Nugent (Barnet) for Connor, Terry Robbins (Welling U) for Evans, Steve Thompson (Slough T) for Handford, Andy Kerr (Wycombe Wanderers) for Horne, Andy Pape (Enfield) for Phillips

Scorers: West (23), Robbins (51), Clarke (57), Watts, o.g. (74)

Steve Peart