

Hotscots FC v Balfour Beatty XI

Saturday 22nd June 2008



Hotscots starting eleven

Ross McClung, Stevie Blythe, Colin S, Kevin Rowe, Seamus Kealey, Stevie Gray, Stuart Sutherland, Alan Rogers, Captain Paul, Darren Girdwood, Craig Anderson (subs, Nick Dickson, Fraser May, Bev)

Manager : Conor Simpson

Peffermill Astroturf, Peffermill, kick off 2pm.

The match kicked off with bright Edinburgh sunshine at the backs of the Hotscots, on a very fast difficult surface, designed more for Hockey than football.

Hotscots lined up with a new look formation as manager Simpson starts to stamp his authority on the team. Using the experience of Colin S at centre back/sweeper, Hotscots started with a 3-5-2 line-up, a new variation to add to the 4-5-1 and 4-4-2 formations previously used. Blythe and Rowe joined Colin S at the back, with Gray (right) and Kealey (left) occupying the wing back roles, although given full reign to attack on the wings. Sutherland started in a defensive midfield role to compliment Rogers and Captain Paul playing high in midfield. Girdwood joined club top scorer Anderson up front. The extremely attacking line up meant Hotscots started the game firmly pinning Balfour Beatty right back in their own half.

The surface was causing both sides problems, as long high balls were pumped forward and both defences had to look sharp to stop any getting through. One such ball towards the BBXI defence had Anderson bearing down on the keeper, but the bounce took the ball beyond his second touch and was cleared to safety. BBXI had chances of their own, with one attack leaving their striker with some space on the left hand side of the box. The resultant drive made McClung work with a low dive to his left to turn the ball past the post.

However this was to spur the Hotscots into action. A simple long high ball caught BBXI by surprise and left Captain Paul one on one with the keeper. As Paul attempted to place the ball into the net, the keeper made an excellent save, with the ball bouncing to the edge of the box. For once a Hotscot was following in, and GIRDWOOD's resultant drive looped over the despairing keeper into the top corner of the net. It was a cultured finish and vindicated his selection as striker.

This settled the Hotscots and they finally found some real rhythm. Goal number 2 came following some fantastic play in midfield. Gray, Captain Paul and Rogers all involved in a slick passing move which meant ANDERSON had the easiest task of scoring his 16th goal in a blue shirt with a clipped finish low past the keeper.

It seemed to be going so well for the Hotscots at the back, with Rowe and Blythe excellently marshalled by Colin S who strolled through the game to produce a solid back 3. Unfortunately right on the stroke of half time, disaster struck when a seemingly hopeless long high ball headed towards the Hotscots box. Uncertainty between the

defence allowed a BBXI striker to get inbetween them, and a scuffed flick of the ball trundled beyond McClung who had come out to defend his near post.

HALF TIME – HOTSCOTS FC 2-1 BBXI

The second half started with Gray being replaced by Dickson, May on for Blythe and Bev on for Girdwood up front. The BBXI goal just before half time became instrumental as they hammered forward with fresh impetus and really pinned Hotscots back for the first 10 minutes. During this spell Hotscots really struggled to gain control and hardly got the ball out of their own half. After one passage of play, a BBXI player volleyed the ball from 20 yards heading towards the top corner of the Hotscots net. McClung got his dive spot on and tipped the ball over the bar for the save of the game.

Hotscots finally got a grip, and started pushing back into the game. Dickson's runs down the right were causing BBXI some major problems, and time after time they had to double up on him to stop him cutting inside. Finally Hotscots got their reward for their tenacity. Captain Paul tried an audacious run into the box, only to have his legs swept away from him and crashed to the ground. Stand-in referee Mallen of Musselburgh, gave the penalty. Craig ANDERSON banged his 2nd of the day, Hotscots third, and took his tally to 17 for the season.

The game seemed to peter out a little after that, although BBXI had a couple of chances, with one being dealt with by McClung diving at the feet of the onrushing attacker, with the second shot being finally scrambled clear by the keeper after a near "Scott Carson" moment. The final whistle sounded, followed by the turning on of the sprinkler system to ensure all left the pitch promptly!

Final Score HOTSCOTS FC 3-1 BBXI

Simpson must have been pleased to see his new look formation work tremendously well, despite worries over the surface, lack of fitness and lack of knowledge of the system. With Colin S at the back, Hotscots seemed to have a greater solidity in defence, and this allowed our 5 man midfield to really grip the game and push forward. Rowe and Blythe also helped out well, with Blythe especially turning in one of his best games for the Hotscots. Girdwood played well up front with Anderson, and Captain Paul had a sound game in midfield. Stu Sutherland also deserved a mention for adapting well to his new position, and his willingness to come back and help out in defence at the start of the second half. Finally well done to Fraser May who came on in the second half and really flourished with a real polished performance at centre back, not putting a foot wrong and showing both his potential, and his development over the last couple of months. 3-5-2 can be added to the compliment of formations we can successfully adapt to as a team.

Another game, another victory, and a couple of excellent goals to add to the collection. In spells today, Hotscots looked like a real threat to any defence, and with the amount of pace in the side, could become a formidable force. Fitness looked sharp as well, with BBXI noticeably tiring in the last 10 minutes. This with a number of players still missing from the line-up. Well done lads!