



London Titans 2-4 Hotscots FC

Sunday 21st September

GFSN league matchday 1



Hotscots starting eleven

Ross McClung, Fraser May, Michel Quiniou, Colin Sinclair, Michael Black, Conor Simpson, Stevie Gray, Stevie Blythe, Stuart Sutherland, Captain Paul, Craig Anderson (Subs, Stuart Mallen, Kevin Rowe)

Manager : Conor Simpson

Old Deer Park, Richmond, kick off 1pm.

Hotscots FC got their league campaign off to a strong start with a well deserved victory away to a much strengthened London Titans side. Despite travelling light on numbers, the Edinburgh side played some good football in spells, and were full of energy and running for the 90 minutes.

The first half was a tentative affair, with the game kicking off in strong sunshine, and a surface that was very dry, with a bounce that was very deceiving. Both sides probed and pushed in the first 20 minutes, with no clear cut chances. Both defences looked to be doing well, until Hotscots found a break on the left hand side on 28 minutes. The resultant cross along the goalmouth was begging for a tap in on the far post, but the ball bobbed over Sutherland's foot, and the chance was gone.

However not long after that, the breakthrough came. Titans failed to clear their lines after some good play by the Hotscots again from the left hand side, and SIMPSON looped the ball from 20 yards with an exquisite left footed volley, a real Rubicon moment for Hotscots FC. This seemed to shock the London side who restarted nervously and began making mistakes. Stuart Mallen was brought on for the injured Gray in midfield and was set a man marking task, one which worked well as Mallen stuck to his job. As the first half drew to a close, it was the Scots who had most of the possession, and looked very much on the ascendancy. Defensively, the back line had been sublime, with keeper McClung only touching the ball once, to kick it back into play.

HALF TIME – LONDON TITANS 0-1 HOTSCOTS FC

The second half kicked off and with Simpson and Sinclair's words of warning, the team came shooting out the starting blocks and looked to kill the game off. The second goal arrived on 50 minutes, Blythe passing the ball into Captain Paul in the 18 yard box who then clipped the ball back to ANDERSON who nutmegged the defender on the line.

Titans barely had time to compose themselves when the third goal came thanks to a high ball and some uncertain defending. A high ball was put into the area, and the keeper ran out. ANDERSON got there first and lobbed the ball over the custodian and then forced the ball home under strong defensive pressure.

A shellshocked Titans side took time to compose themselves and made a few changes in midfield, where they were losing the battle to an energetic, hard working Scots

performance. They got themselves back into the game on 61 minutes, with a free kick was taken with the ball landing on the edge of the 18 yard box. The Hotscots defence were for once slow to clear, and the Titans striker thundered the ball straight at the goal. McClung could only palm the ball into the roof of the net as his position was suspect.

While the Titans celebrated, the Hotscots capitalised and got their fourth goal straight from the kick-off, the perfect response. This time CAPTAIN PAUL got his name on the scoresheet with a superb individual effort, receiving the ball from dogged midfield and wing play. His curling effort into the corner of the net restored the three goal advantage, and surely now had guaranteed 3 points in the bag.

Titans got a second consolation goal on 70 minutes, playing down our right hand side the ball was popped onto the edge of the box. The resultant volley was tipped onto the post by McClung but the ball bounced over the line – a good goal but one we could have avoided.

The game then petered out as Titans tried in vain to get a third. Rowe was brought on for May to shore up the right hand side of defence as the heat began to take it's toll on both sides. Hotscots had one final chance to kill the game off late in, as gaps appeared in the Titans defence as they went in search of goals. A free kick was despatched goalwards but unfortunately just high and wide. It was a jubilant Hotscots side who heard the final whistle, and with it a perfect start to their GFSN league campaign.

Summary:

A perfect start and a good performance from a side under pressure to deliver, this was a hard earned victory for the Hotscots. London Titans were expected to have given us a much sterner test, and they will be disappointed in their own turn-out. No doubt they will get stronger as the season goes on, and they get more match practice together. In defence all the Hotscots players were exceptional, with McClung only touching the ball 4 times in the entire game. Well organised, well drilled and very strong in the tackle, more of the same for the rest of the season please! In midfield we attacked well on the wings, and caused a number of problems, with Stuart Sutherland causing particular trouble on the right, winning him the man of the match award. Up front we always looked dangerous and capable of scoring, with a bit of luck we could have had a couple more than 4 goals!

Well done to all those who went to make history for the Hotscots. 1 game played 1 win, 8 to go. Birmingham Blaze up next, at home on Sunday 12th October.