



TOOLSTATION LEAGUE LES PHILLIPS CUP FIRST ROUND

Tuesday 19th December 2006

PREMIER SIDE WILLAND HAVE TO DIG DEEP

Willand Rovers 2-1 Westbury United

Westbury United bowed out of cup competitions for this season, but not before putting up a real fight away to Premier Division side Willand Rovers. James Dowd played his first 90 minutes for several months and teenager Jason Povey made an encouraging debut once he gained in confidence. It was a freezing evening in Devon and the whole match was played at an entertaining, fast pace.

The home side controlled the early stages and led 2-0 by the 21st minute through a brace by David Steele. His first came after just three minutes; goalkeeper Nathan Whatley's long pass found an offside-looking Paul Pocock, he crossed into the box where Richard Pears brought a brilliant save out of Nick Evans, but the ball rebounded to Steele who lashed it into the top corner. Steele's second goal was a superb effort; Pocock's clever back-heel found his team-mate and the Willand midfielder rifled a 25 yarder into the bottom right hand corner of Evans' goal.

Westbury had their chances from set pieces. Luke Smith's free kick saw Mark Pearce have an effort blocked by Simon Hill, and from a Smith corner Nathan Hallett's point blank volley was saved by Whatley. Tarick Yachou latched onto Nick Beales' pass and attempted a lob just before the break but the ball dropped wide of the target.

Westbury dominated almost the whole second half and it was a real surprise that it took them until the last five minutes to score. Some direct play and all out attacking football led to the home defence clearing the ball desperately for corners and throw ins. From two Smith corners the goal nearly came; Hallett sending a header wide and Pearce forcing James Ansell into a headed goal line clearance.

Wayne Wheeler latched onto a loose ball and swerved an effort wide before a penalty box scramble occurred in the 70th minute; Yachou burst forward and brought a top save out of Whatley, in the resulting scramble Dowd had an effort blocked and the Willand defenders were happy to hoof the ball away. Paul Brickley changed the formation to 3-4-3 in the last ten minutes, with Matty Bown coming on and Pearce pushed up front. The latter hit a 20 yarder that was saved by Whatley.

With fog descending visibility became tricky, however somehow the referee didn't award Willand a spot kick when Dowd blatantly tripped Lee Woodman. Evans, a spectator throughout the half, dived full length to deny Pears before Westbury got their lifeline on 88 ; with everyone pushing forward Wheeler was fouled by Steele and a penalty awarded to Westbury, David Thompson fired in the kick to make it 2-1. There was too little time remaining for Westbury to force extra time, however they can be proud of pushing a side from the higher league right to the end and confidence should be high for a promotion push.

*STAR MEN - David Steele (Willand Rovers) and Nick Beales (Westbury United)

TEAM - Nick Evans, James Dowd, Luke Smith, Mark Pearce, David Thompson, Lee Morgan

Nick Beales, Jason Povey, Tarick Yachou, Wayne Wheeler, Nathan Hallett

SUBS - Matty Bown, Ben Turner, Alex Poole (all used)