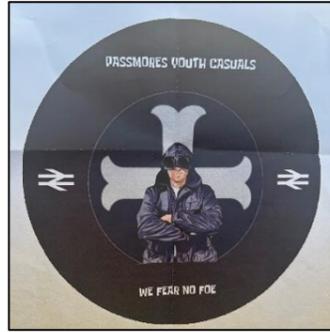


## **Match Report: Passmores 2-0 Mark Hall**

The Passmores Youth Casuals commuted anxiously to the hallowed astro of Harlow Town FC to witness a dominant performance from Passmores' First XI in a match which was marred throughout by ugly scenes, poor finishing and wanton brutality.

The stands were close to full with anxious spectators; siblings, parents, teachers, girlfriends, all had gathered for one reason: to see our brave boys do battle for one final time.



The opening exchanges set the tone for a first half which was all fire and fury but severely lacking quality. Tireless left-back Blessing Danquah stood out early on, winning some crashing headers and linking up well with forward Albie Tyler to create a host of problems for the Mark Hall full-back. Feisty challenges were flying in from both sides, and it was an excellent, crunching tackle from Danquah which saw him win the ball on halfway, charge forward and cross dangerously into the area for the game's first chance. Unfortunately, right winger Oakley Harrison mis-controlled at an awkward height and the ball bounced harmlessly wide.

Sustained pressure and a flurry of corners followed this but no real chances until Harrison, looking to redeem his earlier miss, showed great pace down the right and whipped in a curling, teasing, peach of a cross which Tyler just failed to connect with properly and finish.

All the pressure was coming through the Passmores left hand side, Danquah and Tyler both showing simply too much aggression and pace for the Mark Hall players who seemed like mere children in the face of such a footballing onslaught. However, chances weren't coming until a free kick, won by returning languid

striker Ethan Ottley, was floated in beautifully by Haydn Kearney to cultured centre back Alfie Collins who skewed a difficult chance wide.

Passmores now began to resort to long balls which brought some pressure to bear but without the usual incision that we expect from the silky ballers that don the famous blue and blue of Passmores. Mark Hall were quiet, but some danger remained on the counter and Danquah had to be alert to snuff out a fast break on halfway, his tactical foul earning applause from the more cynical Passmores fans on the sidelines with one spectator remarking that it was, 'Clinical, cynical, and class'.

With a third of the game gone there was a desperate need for quality, and who best to step up and provide that than our own miniature magician, Harry Dorrington. Under pressure from two players in the middle of the park, Dorrington, oozing class and composure, dragged back past one before rouletting past another and released the ball out wide to Tyler in space.

This moment of footballing sorcery seemed to inspire the rest of the team and was quickly followed by captain Charlie Johnson who showed quick feet to slip between two defenders before his shot was blocked. A free kick followed and Ottley, coming into the game after a hat-trick in the semi, curled just over from 25 yards.

The final chance of the half was perhaps the cleanest. Good work from Johnson and Tyler in the middle released Ottley 1-1, he controlled the ball skilfully with his head before shooting powerfully, but the Mark Hall 'keeper proved equal to his efforts. Mark Hall were showing more signs of frustration now, and a succession of horror tackles ended the half, first on

Collins and then on year 10 Bobby McDonald. Half time, 0-0.

The second half started with a bang as a long ball from a free kick was expertly controlled by Harrison with the outside of his boot and slotted home from just inside the area. With the deadlock finally broken, Passmores tails were up and chances came thick and fast. Mere minutes later Ottley doubled the lead, heading coolly into the bottom right corner from Kearney's cross.

Sensing trouble, the Mark Hall manager moved the danger man into the middle and he epitomised the Mark's approach, losing the ball and being swiftly booked for a vicious assault on a Passmore's midfielder.

More chances rained down on the Mark Hall goal and the 'keeper must be credited for keeping the score respectable. First, Johnson bullied his way past the opposing left back and crossed dangerously to the six-yard box. The ball was well parried by the 'keeper and Tyler was inches away from adding a third goal to Passmore's tally on the rebound. Harisson then showed electric pace again, this time on the counter. Starting with the ball just inside his own half, he barrelled past 4 Mark Hall defenders before shooting smartly to the near post, the ball somehow staying out after deflecting wickedly off the 'keeper's face.

The tidal wave of Passmore's pressure now began to truly crash over the helpless Mark Hall players. Indicative of their confidence and swagger was an outrageous, Berbatov-esque first touch from Harrison which allowed him to quickly release Ottley on the edge of the area who found Danquah on the overlap crossing dangerously but the 'keeper was equal to it.



Mark Hall were without a chance, prayer or hope in the game and, unable to win in footballing terms, they decided to try and make their mark in other ways. First, after skipping past two challenges in the middle of the park Dorrington was forced to vault a horrific lunge that probably would've snapped his miniature meniscus if it had connected. The offending player was sent to an early bath after a despicable spat of dissent which followed.

Danquah was the next to be targeted by the Mark Hall assault squad, being hit with a disgracefully late challenge after cutting inside his opposite number. Credit to him, he kept his head which was more than can be said for the Mark Hall players who, unconcerned by the wave of scuffed knees and burnt thighs, were slipping and sliding over the astro like an out-of-control F1 car.

The inevitable second red card followed shortly after when first Harrison and then Dorrington were both scythed down from behind in cynical fashion. Not content with felling the miniature maestro, the Mark Hall centre mid proceeded to walk over him,

reminiscent of Hyde's scandalous trampling of the child. A scuffle broke out, Dorrington was manhandled again, this time round the neck, and the ref had no choice but to show another red.

The game was far gone but there was still time for high drama. Star men Adam Domican and Bobby Durrant entered the fray and were immediately involved, Domican rolling the ball nicely to Kearney on the edge whose shot flew just over. Ottley was then viciously assaulted by the Mark Hall 'keeper who somehow avoided both a red and a penalty, the resulting free kick from Johnson being saved comfortably.

Domican, who'd only been on the pitch for 5 minutes, was then ambushed, guerilla style, by two players in tandem. A strong forearm to the chest put him to the floor and mere seconds later he was clattered over, thigh high and studs up, leaving him bleeding on the ground.

The final moments saw chances at either end, year 10 Tommy Newnham was in from a free kick and showed great feet before shooting just wide. Then penalty hero

Oliver Matthews brought rousing cheers from the Passmore's Faithful with his first real involvement in the game, a confidence inspiring save from a curling free kick.

Then final whistle blew. Buckets of sweat, pints of blood and the Harlow School's cup secured, manager Jack Webber was speechless, only managing to utter, 'I don't know any quotes'. Neither do we Jack, neither do we.

**MOTM:** Harry Dorrington / Haydn Kearney

**Pictures courtesy of:** EGB Ltd.

**Reporter at the scene:** A Lovell

