

FA Trophy Preliminary Qualifying Round – Saturday, 8th October 2011

Halesowen Town 0 Romulus 1

Halesowen's FA Trophy torture continued with resilient Romulus leaving the hosts still seeking their first win in the competition for five seasons.

Sutton Coldfield-based Romulus ply their trade at an equivalent level to Halesowen within the Evo-Stik Northern league structure but had previously made a poor start to their season, dogged by defensive issues, without an away league victory. But the visitors snatched an early lead and Halesowen then found it an uphill struggle to reply in the attempt to meet Leamington in the next round. The cause was not helped by the late dismissal of Brendan Kelly, with the unexpected defeat meaning yet another season without any FA competition prize income of any sort.

In the opening ten minutes Peter Folkes handed Romulus the first corner of the game and Marvin Johnson's 30 yard shot flew wide. Romulus claimed the solitary winning goal as early as the 15th minute when loose defensive play allowed Johnson to cross from the right and towering Nathan **BLISSETT** worked free to head home from the edge of the six yard box.

As Halesowen came into the game, ex-Yeltz goalkeeper Chris Jay collected a bobbling effort from Andrew Westwood in the 19th minute. Justin Nisbett then did well down the right but Mark Smith's resulting shot was blocked and Kelly hit a further shot wide from 20 yards out.

Midway through the first half home goalkeeper Paul Evans recovered from a weak clearance to make a good save with his chest from Chris Morris and at the other end Michael McGrath struck a free-kick straight at the defensive wall from the edge of the area after being initially fouled. Livewire Nisbett then saw his dangerous cross hacked away for a corner by Richard Robinson after 35 minutes. Jay completed a superb reflex save by flicking the ball up and away after Arshad first won a corner and then met McGrath's 39th minute corner kick.

The Yeltz improved further after the interval and Arshad went close to a 51st minute equaliser when he beat goalkeeper Jay to Kelly's long ball and hooked the ball towards an empty net but defender Jemiah Richards recovered to turn the ball around the post. Seconds later, McGrath

struck the outside of the post from 25 yards but home goalkeeper Evans kept Halesowen in the game with his brilliant 53rd minute save denying Robinson.

As Halesowen's urgency intensified, Nisbett's superb 20 yard curling effort was clawed out from under the bar by Jay in the 64th minute and the visiting defence eventually hacked clear as the ball bounced around the penalty area from the corner. After 67 minutes Nisbett's cheeky back-heel from Smith's cross rebounded for substitute Nathan Jackson but he blazed over the bar. Jackson's speculative 70th minute shot from almost 40 yards then bounced just wide.

But Halesowen's hopes ended and the spell of late pressure was undone when Kelly was dismissed with a straight red card for a clumsy 72nd minute lunge on Nathan Walker. Halesowen's ten men created little else, although Jackson fired an excellent chance wide in the seventh minute of stoppage time.

Halesowen Town: P. Evans; Smith, Kelly, Folkes, Godwin, McGrath, Westwood, Saunders (c) (Caines 79), Arshad (N. Jackson 61), Nisbett, Gueyes (Hinds 51). Unused Subs: Coward, Reid.

Romulus:

Jay; Robert Evans, Richard Evans (Forde 89), Richards (T. Evans 58), Robinson, Day, Walker, Johnson, Blissett, Morris, Powis (c). Unused Sub: Lee, A. Jackson, Exhall.

Referee:

S. Eagland (Lichfield)

Attendance:

277

Booked

: Blissett(15), Richards (26), N. Jackson (78), Folkes(90)

Sent Off:

Kelly (72)

Brew and View Halesowen Town Match of the Match: Naveed Arshad (presented by Matthew Russell)

