

HotScots FC 4 v 2 Village Manchester
(Craig P, Alan (2), Paul)

I'm delighted to report that we have got off to an excellent start with a 4-2 home victory against Village Manchester in our opening GFSN Cup fixture.

Village Manchester, having been defeated 1-0 by us in our final World Cup fixture, fielded an improved team strengthened with 4 additions from their 1st team squad who take part in a local Manchester League (and came 5th in the World Cup's first division). HotScots on the other hand were rocked with a serious injury blow to Daddy Mac which saw the end of the new (yet) 'old' (total age 65) central defensive partnership of Mac and Gray (work commitments) before a competitive ball was kicked in anger! Gaffer Paul surprised a few by employing Conor and Mark B together for the first time in these positions (making Daddy Mac and Gray look like spring chickens) with a combined age of 70 and counting! This paid early dividends (for Manchester!) as poor defending, subsequent confusion with our usual bad luck thrown in saw us score an og to give Manchester an early 1-0 lead!!!

Soon after, Craig P broke free and was quickly supported by Paul to his left and Stu to his right with no Manchester players within 15 yards of all three! However, his early shot - though powerful - lacked the required accuracy and went high and wide. This spurred Craig, and indeed the whole team into action, and HotScots began to create chances. A scramble in the box involving Paul & Alan saw the ball break free to the edge of the box with Craig and Stu S fast approaching. Despite shouts from Paul of "Stu's ball!" (having witnessed the earlier miss no doubt!) Craig P arrived first with a powerful shout, which took a deflection, to beat the Manchester stand in GK to tie the game. 10 minutes later good play initially from Eric, saw Craig P send a cross into the box which Paul and Alan leapt for - the ball eventually coming off Alan's head (!) to give the HotScots a 2-1 lead.

However, Manchester rallied and were finding gaps through midfield with the impressive Jay pulling the strings in midfield. HotScots gave away a free on the edge of the box which Ranson took and scored to equalise.

Half Time: 1-1

HotScots players were very disappointed to be going in only level at the break and the gaffer pointed out that we had to up the tempo, play the game our way and do something about it - make things happen. Spotting a weakness in Manchester's tactics/formation, a tactical change at the break saw Paul move to left wing, Alan to the right with Gus replacing Eric but playing as the forward behind Craig P.

HotScots did indeed up their tempo and began to play some excellent football in patches, completely dominating the game for the most part. Vinnie and Stu had a grip on Manchester's midfield, Conor and Mark had settled into their new roles and were very controlled and comfortable, with Fraser continuing his good form and Michael looking solid at right back. Paul and Alan were getting a lot of the ball and creating numerous chances. Confidence was growing - so much so that Alan decided to score from a cross - well, it's not the first time he's tricked a defence with that option! Martin had one save to make in the second half and this was an excellent one at a crucial

time.

Centre mid began to link up very well with Craig P and Gus and indeed the two wingers too, with numerous chances being created. Following excellent runs from Stu, Paul played him in but too many touches on the ball saw both opportunities go without goals. Craig P shouted at his manager to "take a pop next time". 2 minutes later that next time arose and Paul elected to shoot from outside the box, with his looping shot beating the gk to give HotScots a deserved 4-2 lead. (A clear shot Mr Black!!!) Paul's modest celebration was loved by Conor! :P (He's warned me not to do it again! Conor - for that I have to score again remember!)

One negative in the second half was an injury to Vinnie which saw two ambulances arrive to take him to hospital – most of us having left to feast on Priscilla's lovely post match buffet. But I can happily report that Vinnie is grand - nothing broke, but he will need a few weeks rest to recover.

Vinnie was voted as man of the match by Village Manchester - Well done.

We got a rating of 10/10 from the referee for sportsmanship from the referee.

Regional Cup Table – After Round 1

- 1) Newcastle Panthers (+4) **3**
- 2) **HotScots FC** (+2) **3**
- 3) Village Manchester (-2) **0**
- 4) Saltire Thistle (-4) **0**