

HotScots FC suffer first pre season defeat

HotScots FC 2 v Radio Forth 4

Starting Team:- Kris S, Michael B, Fraser M, Kevin R, Conor S, David M, Captain Paul, Nik D, Eric B, Stu S, Craig A.

Used subs: - Seamus K, Susan D.

HotScots FC took to the field missing some influential players from last week's comprehensive victory over the perpetually confident London Falcons.

Nevertheless the return of Conor and Nik (both highly prominent in last season's successful campaign) ensured that confidence remained high. Captain Paul started in his favourite central midfield position after an impressive second half display against the Falcons; Michael continued in the sweeper position after a dominant display in the last game; Stu S's reward for that last minute miss (of the season?!) was a place up front in behind the target man Craig; and, Kevin R and Fraser M had their chance to shine.

Radio Forth had some familiar faces in their team – from previous defeats. They had a good mixture of youth and experience and are probably on a par (if not a better 'footballing' side) than our regular opponents Haddington.

HotScots started the game against the wind and were almost immediately under pressure, with the Radio Forth strikers having a couple of early (but wild) shots at goal. A lack of cohesion in the HotScots set up was evident as was Simpson's lack of match fitness and Radio Forth were beginning to pass the ball around nicely, pulling most home players out of position.

Midway through the first half – arguably against the run of play – HotScots captain Paul took the ball just outside his own box and hit a long pass to Anderson who had dropped deep. Anderson, with a fantastic first touch, turned the ball into the path of Nik who had taken off down the right wing. Nik controlled the ball beautifully before unleashing a thunderous strike to score, giving the HotScots a surprise 1 nil lead.

This spurred the HotScots into action and they began to play some of the neat, passing football which was so evident in their previous fixture. HotScots looked very dangerous, particularly on the counter attack, with Sutherland, Captain Paul and Nik looking lively. Mullan and the back three of Rowe, May and Black coped admirably with Radio Forth's continued pressure.

It was one of these counter attacks that led to the HotScots second goal. Eric released the ball to Captain Paul who ran down the left wing and delivered an accurate through ball to Mullan. A good first touch by Mullan saw him get into a dangerous position in the box before being pushed by a desperate Radio Forth defender – penalty. Rather bizarrely – or

certainly interestingly – with no pre match decision about penalty takers, Anderson took the ball (didn't look at his Manager or Captain) and placed it on the penalty spot. With a chance to continue his pre season scoring spree Anderson confidently stepped up but hit a tame effort directly at the Radio Forth goalkeeper. However, the rebound came back to the alert Anderson who volleyed sweetly to the keeper's right to give the HotScots a two goal cushion. Anderson forgiven.

HotScots two goal lead was certainly against the strong wind, if not against the run of play.

With five minutes left in the first half a Radio Forth striker hit a stunning strike which came off the post and went in to reduce the deficit to one.

Half time score: - HotScots 2 v Radio Forth 1

Though Radio Forth shaded the second half HotScots weren't without their chances. Nik continued to cause problems with his pacy runs, Paul and Anderson did some excellent one-tuos which ended with Sutherland just hitting over, Anderson was lively and created opportunities, Dawson came on and saw a shot go just over; but, the biggest (or only) disappointment with the HotScots second half performance was the decision making with the final ball. Impossible shots or runs were attempted when at times two people were completely free.

Radio Forth scored ten minutes into the second half and the scores remained level with about eight minutes to go. Two late goals gave the Radio Forth team a flattering scoreline but a deserved victory.

HotScots – with some good players missing – showed again that they can play 'pass and move' football, which is effective. The first goal – like 3 or 4 in the previous game – was evidence of this. Against much more capable opposition today HotScots were without Stevie G, Colin S, Craig P, Rich, Gus, Alan, Kev M but still put in a very commendable performance. Eric had a much improved game and is clearly beginning to be more comfortable in the difficult wing position; Mullan increased competition for midfield places with a solid performance; Simpson will benefit greatly from this match fitness; Rowe and May were excellent at the back with May in particular putting in an outstanding performance. Kris – whilst maybe disappointed with one of the goals produced some crucial saves again today. And Anderson, well - he scored again!

So, Rowe and May hardly put a foot wrong and Black was flawless again, but Sutherland, Gray and Sinclair will be looking to return to defence – pick 3 from that!

Mullan did a fine job, Simpson's on his way back, Craig P will be looking for his place back, Captain Paul doesn't want to give it up, Rich played well last week, surely Gus wants a centre midfield place too, Alan? Will Stew Fraser return? Will one of Sutherland, Gray or Black need to be moved here? Pick 3 from that!

And the wingers ... Gus, Alan, Eric, Nik, Seamus .. pick 2 from that!

Kev M, Anderson, Paul, Gus, Suzy, Stu... up front?

HotScots' squad is looking strong and players are really putting in an effort in preseason to claim a place in the first team.

The HotScots v HotScots game next week promises to be a mouth watering epic! Who else is going to stake their claim for a place in the team? Darren, David, Jonathan, Martin, Adam, Ross, Rab ...

Make sure your name is down lads.

I know I'd struggle to pick the starting eleven for the first game of the season but then that's not my job... over to you Conor and Ross. I'm sure it's a struggle you're happy to have!

Onwards and upwards HotScots...