DARTFORD 2 HAMPTON & RICHMOND 2

Jake Robinson put in a Man of The Match performance and scored a brace, as Dartford were held by Hampton and Richmond Borough in front of 1,066 supporters at Bericote Powerhouse Princes Park.

A lively first-half exploded into life immediately, as both sides served up an entertaining concoction of end-to-end football in stages. And, it was the visitors who created the first opportunity as early as the fourth minute, when Ruaridh Donaldson whipped in a dangerous cross from their left-flank. Defender Tommy Block was first to reach the ball, but headed wide of Dan Wilks' upright.

The hosts launched an attack straight from Wilks' goal-kick, forcing the Beavers to commit the foul. Jack Jebb's free-kick was sent into the box, but was somewhat cleared, only for the ball to be headed straight back across the box into the path of Jake Robinson, who slotted home his thirteenth goal (in all competitions) of the season (5).

Hampton retaliated with a good move of their own four minutes later via Zach Robinson. He found himself one-on-one with Kai Woollard-Innocent, yet it was the QPR loanee who won the battle with an excellent challenge.

The Darts soon settled into a rhythm and carved out some good opportunities, as they chiselled away at the Hampton defence. Kieran Murtagh fed Kalvin Kalala with a good pass, before the Frenchman sent a dangerous cross into the box in the 16th minute. The defence cleared the ball, but only as far as the returning Danny Leonard. Unfortunately, his movement was thwarted and the visitors cleared the danger.

The hosts weren't satisfied though, and four minutes later Luke Allen set up Jack Jebb perfectly, only for the latter's brilliant drive fly just over Alan Julian's crossbar! Undeterred, the hosts continued to attack and came close once again in the 24th minute. This time, Leonard started the move after receiving the ball on the right-flank. He raced away, sent in an inviting cross, which Robinson narrowly missed, only for Kalala to connect with the ball brilliantly. Unfortunately, his shot was deflected wide of Julian's far post.

However, as Dartford pushed forward, seeking to increase their lead, they were always going to be vulnerable to a counter-attack. And when Murtagh's close-range effort cannoned back off of Julian's crossbar, the Beavers attacked swiftly. Jake Gray was too quick and able to get beyond the Dartford defence to race clear before setting up Sam Deadfield, who tucked the ball beyond Dan Wilks (26).

Dartford responded and were awarded a free-kick, which Jebb took responsibility for. The Hampton defence was left wanting, and Robinson was there to poke the ball home on the half-hour mark and give his side a well-deserved lead at the break.

Five minutes into the second forty-five should have seen Dartford extend their lead, after a shot from the edge of the box was saved by Julian. However, the goalkeeper didn't keep the ball safe and by some miracle several stabs at it in amongst the melee failed to produce a goal. And, unfortunately the hosts were made to pay four minutes later.

A Beaver attack on the right-flank caused all sorts of problems and, as Brandon Barzey got into the box, Kalvin Kalala was adjudged to have fouled him. A penalty was awarded and Jack McKnight stepped up to level the score at 2-2.

Jake Robinson responded for the Darts, but his 57th minute effort flew just wide of Julian's post, before the Dartford defence blocked a Tyrell Miller-Rodney effort at the other end seconds later, as the visitors began to push the Darts back into their own half. Brandon Barzey was at it again in the 59th minute by feeding Jake Gray with a good ball which resulted in the latter forcing a good save from Dan Wilks.

Manager Steve King tried to ignite his players by switching things around, as Jordan Wynter and Ade Azeez replaced Josh Clarke and Kalvin Kalala respectively in the 62nd minute. While Tyrique Hyde came on for Kieran Murtagh twelve minutes later, before there was a four minute stoppage while both team's medical staff attended to a fan in the stand on the far side of the pitch (from where I sit) as we reached the 80th minute. Credit must go to all involved, as well as to the players and officials for alerting the medical teams so swiftly. I'm sure that I speak for everyone involved with both clubs that we wish the person involved a speedy recovery.

The closing moments saw Ade Azeez have an effort ruled out for offside (86), before Dan Wilks saved well to keep out an effort from the edge of the box by Tyrell Miller-Rodney (90). A long free-kick from Wilks then found Tom Bonner in the Beaver box in stoppage time, but the Captain's header was just wide of Julian's post.

The result sees the Darts remain in fifth place in the National League South table, while also preserving their unbeaten record at Fortress Bericote Powerhouse Princes Park.

TEAMS

DARTFORD: Dan Wilks, Josh Clarke, Kai Woollard-Innocent, Luke Allen, Connor Essam, Tom Bonner ©, Danny Leonard, Kieran Murtagh, Jake Robinson, Kalvin Kalala, Jack Jebb.
SUBSTITUTES: Ronnie Vint, Jordan Wynter, George Porter, Tyrique Hyde, Ade Azeez.

HAMPTON & RICHMOND: Alan Julian, Tommy Block, Ruaridh Donaldson, Dean Inman, Sam Deadfield, Jake Gray, Zach Robinson, Jack McKnight, Tyrell Miller-Rodney, Kyron Farrell, Brandon Barzey.
SUBSTITUTES: Leo Hamblin, Sane Dunne, Jorome Slew, David Fisher, Zach Dronfield.

By Chris Palmer