

CONCORD RANGERS 1 DARTFORD 0

Dartford travelled to Canvey Island, Essex on a cold November evening, where they faced eleventh placed Concord Rangers at The Aspect Arena in what proved to be another frustrating game, as they succumbed to a second consecutive defeat on the road.

Following the weekend's defeat at Dorking Wanderers, manager Steve King shuffled his side, with Josh Hill, Luke Allen, Danny Leonard, and Dan Roberts all returning to the starting eleven for this fixture. However, despite that injection of pace available via the latter two, goalscoring opportunities were few and far between in a close first forty-five.

In fact, the ball predominantly remained in the middle of the pitch, as neither side was prepared to give an inch. When an opportunity was created, however, it was the visitors who rose to the occasion as Ade Azeez was put through on goal by some wonderful play. Unfortunately, goalkeeper Myles Roberts was alert to the threat and was able to save well from Azeez's ninth minute shot.

The midfield trio of Noor Husin, Kieran Murtagh, and Luke Allen were looking effective in the Dartford engine room, and two of them were influential in creating the visitors' next opportunity in the 24th minute. A terrific piece of play resulted in Allen and Husin playing a neat one-two, before the latter took on the shot from distance after an opening had been created. Unfortunately, his effort sailed high and wide of Roberts' goal.

There were a flurry of corners for the Darts, particularly in the final third of the half, but the Concord defence stood firmly. And speaking of The Beachboys, they failed to register a shot on target, as they resorted to taking pot-shots from distance, none of which tested Dan Wilks. In fact, their best move came five minutes before the break when Ryan Blackman and Temi Babalola combined well in a swift attack, which forced the Darts to concede a free-kick in a dangerous position. Thankfully, Joe Payne sent the set-piece over the top.

Dartford started the second-half positively and forced another flurry of corners. But, the Concord defence held on and then broke away with an attack of their own five minutes in, only for James Blanchfield to fall over in the box and receive a yellow card for simulation from referee Steven Hughes.

At this stage, the game became a little stretched as both sides searched for an opener. And it was the visitors who struck first, only to see Myles Roberts save well from Dan Roberts' fine 52nd minute effort. The resulting corner found Luke Allen in the box, but his low drive ricocheted off of a defender to go behind for another corner (55).

Unfortunately, the hosts would launch a good attack themselves in the 63rd minute, and Lamar Reynolds was able to get into the box from the left, beat his man and send a well-taken shot beyond Dan Wilks to edge The Beachboys in front.

As the visitors pressed forward for an equaliser, Reynolds got through a second time five minutes later, but Kieran Murtagh was there to thwart the forward with an excellent tackle before Josh Hill

did a similar job to prevent Babalola from getting through a minute later. Yet, Reynolds was at it again in the 73rd minute, as he raced away from the Dartford defence, only for Wilks to pull off a brilliant save to keep the score at 1-0.

Steve King introduced Emmanuel Sonupe and Luke Wanadio for Luke Allen and Danny Leonard respectively after 76 minutes, before Ade Azeez left the field for George Porter with ten minutes remaining. But, no matter how hard they tried, the Darts just couldn't find that perfect final ball to rescue a point.

So, Dartford left Canvey Island having now picked up just one point from three games on the road. Furthermore, Steve King must surely be wondering where the next goal will come from, having seen his side fail to score for three straight games. Once again, however, the team will be looking to turn their fortunes around at Bericote Powerhouse Princes Park this Saturday, where they'll play for the first time in a month.

TEAMS

CONCORD RANGERS: Myles Roberts, Wyan Reid, Joe Payne, Aron Pollock ©, Ollie Kensdale, Ryan Blackman, James Blanchfield, Temi Babalola, Danny Green, Lamar Reynolds, Jayden Randell.

SUBSTITUTES: Tosan Popo, Jake Peck, Odei Martin, Ciaran Gordon-Stearn, Billy Roast.

DARTFORD: Dan Wilks, Jordan Wynter, Jernade Meade, Noor Husin, Josh Hill, Tom Bonner ©, Danny Leonard, Kieran Murtagh, Dan Roberts, Luke Allen, Ade Azeez.

SUBSTITUTES: Jack Jebb, Connor Essam, George Porter, Emmanuel Sonupe, Luke Wanadio.

By Chris Palmer