

DARTFORD 4 WELLING UNITED 2

Marcus Dinanga scored a brace, as Dartford came from behind twice to claim victory and the double over local rivals Welling United in front of 1,802 supporters at a cold Bericote Powerhouse Princes Park.

Steve King's comments regarding the visitors in the matchday program were spot on, as Peter Taylor's side raced out of the blocks to take the lead as early as the third minute. With the Wings pressing high, Kristian Campbell intercepted the ball from a Dan Wilks pass, before crossing it to Afolabi Akinyemi, who slotted the ball into the back of the net.

The game was wide open for a majority of the first-half, and the Wings could have doubled their lead nine minutes later when an Aaron Barnes cross from the right found Campbell free inside the six-yard box. Thankfully, the latter's header flew high over Wilks' crossbar and the hosts were able to attack themselves from the goalkeeper's kick. The move eventually found Jack Jebb, who tried a neat curling drive from distance, which narrowly missed the top corner of Jack Sims' goal (13).

Dartford wouldn't rue the miss for long though, because they drew level with a marvellous goal in the 18th minute. A long ball over-the-top caught the Wings' defence napping, setting up Marcus Dinanga in a one-on-one situation with Sims. The goalkeeper rushed out, but Dinanga lobbed him with a terrific chipped effort to level the score and open his account in only his second start for the club.

However, Welling showed just how much they'd improved under Peter Taylor by hassling the Darts in the midfield immediately. And, three minutes later Campbell got the better of Kory Roberts before threading the ball towards Aaron Barnes. With the defence breached, the hosts tried to race back and Kai Woollard-Innocent was adjudged to have fouled Barnes inside the box. Referee, Mr Callum Walchester, pointed to the spot and Akinyemi converted to restore the visitors' lead.

The hosts responded well and Danny Leonard had an effort blocked by the Welling defence (23), before Roberts headed the resulting Jack Jebb corner wide of Sims' post seconds later. Then the visitors countered and Jordan Wynter intervened with a superb block to prevent Campbell's effort from troubling Wilks between the sticks (31).

Sixty seconds later saw the Darts pull themselves level once again after another excellent piece of attacking football. Kai Woollard-Innocent received the ball on the left and, making up for his previous foul, found Danny Leonard in the danger area, who was on hand to slot home his fourth league goal of the season (8th in all competitions).

There were opportunities a-plenty for both sides during the remainder of the half, but it was the Wings who came closest when Olumide Durojaiye forced Wilks into a fine save with a long-range drive in the 43rd minute.

The second forty-five saw Steve King's side look far more in control, as they set about getting the three points while keeping the Welling attacking threat at bay. And, with a majority of the play taking

place in the middle of the park, the Dartford manager introduced fresh pairs of legs after the 58th minute. Ade Azeez entered proceedings to replace Jake Robinson, while a minute later Danny Leonard limped off the field to be replaced by George Porter.

The first real opportunity came soon after, when Connor Essam's well-taken strike ricocheted off of a defender and went behind for a corner (61). Kieran Murtagh, standing in as captain with the absence of Tom Bonner, then followed that up with an effort of his own after he'd got himself onto the end of a good cross in the 63rd minute. Unfortunately, his header was just wide of Sims' post, before Jack Jebb's left-footed strike flew just over the crossbar (73).

Two minutes later saw the hosts attack once again, as they raced forward. The ball eventually fell to Luke Allen outside the Welling box and, connecting with it perfectly, the midfielder sent a wonderful low effort beyond the hapless Sims and into the bottom corner.

The visitors tried to respond by pushing forward and were almost caught out when Ade Azeez seeked out Dinanga with a delightful cross, which the latter could only head the wrong side of the post (83). Not that the miss mattered though because, in the 88th minute, the striker scored his second and Dartford's fourth of the afternoon to put the game to bed. And, what a goal it was too! Collecting the ball on the right side, Dinanga then took a touch before sending a wonderful curling drive into the top corner to ensure the three points remained in Dartford.

To top his afternoon off, the Altrincham loanee was then given the Man of The Match award for his performance, as the hosts registered the double over the Wings. The result sees Dartford close the gap to the top in this highly competitive National League South table, as well as extend their unbeaten record at Fortress Bericote Powerhouse Princes Park to seventeen games in all competitions.

TEAMS

DARTFORD: Dan Wilks, Jordan Wynter, Kai Woollard-Innocent, Luke Allen, Kory Roberts, Connor Essam, Danny Leonard, Kieran Murtagh ©, Jake Robinson, Marcus Dinanga, Jack Jebb.

SUBSTITUTES: George Porter, Che Krabbendam, Tyrique Hyde, Ade Azeez, D'Sean Theobalds.

WELLING UNITED: Jack Sims, Chibuikwe Ezennolim, Aaron Barnes, Maxwell Statham, Ademola Shokunbi, Olumide Durojaiye, Afolabi Akinyemi, Mason Saunders-Henry, Kristian Campbell, Tommy Davis, Arthur Penny.

SUBSTITUTES: Daniel Parish, Joseph Muscatt, Thomas Derry, Bradley Stevenson, Samuel Jackson.

By Chris Palmer