

EASTBOURNE BOROUGH 2 DARTFORD 7

Marcus Dinanga and Calvin Kalala both netted braces, together with solo efforts from Dan Roberts, Kory Roberts, and Jordan Greenidge, as Dartford thrashed Eastbourne Borough to finish the regular season in style at Priory Lane.

The game kicked-off in emphatic fashion, as both sides attacked with determination in a thrilling game of football in front of 1,117 supporters. And, it was the visitors who almost opened the scoring as early as the third minute. Calvin Kalala's driving run drew the foul from an Eastbourne defender and referee, Mr Oliver Mackey, awarded the free-kick. Jack Jebb took it, but goalkeeper Lee Worgan managed to make the save.

However, the Darts' high pressing won them the ball back less than a minute later. Dan Roberts received the ball, then raced into the box before opening the scoring with a delightful effort (4).

The Sports responded via the lively Charley Kendall a minute later, but Kristian Campbell was alert to read the danger before clearing. However, by the seventh minute Eastbourne were level. Kendall collected the ball in the middle of the park and then drove at the Dartford goal. The hosts' player of the season was too quick for the Dartford defence, and he calmly fired a low strike across Reice Charles-Cook to equalise (7).

The Sports then tried to gain the advantage during a good period for them, but their efforts proved to be of ill-effect. First Joel Rollinson set up Charlie Walker, but the latter failed to find the target (27), before Chris Whelpdale found James Hammond, but he was thwarted by Charles-Cook (28).

Two minutes later, seemingly against the run of play, Tom Bonner found Marcus Dinanga with a wonderful ball over-the-top. The striker raced into the Eastbourne box before firing a delightful effort into the top corner. Then, six minutes further on saw the visitors stretch their lead to 3-1, as the pressure began to cause problems for the hosts. A Jack Jebb corner caused no end of problems, which Eastbourne failed to clear. Jebb crossed the ball in a second time, and Kory Roberts was on hand to bury it (36).

Undeterred, the hosts kept on probing and should have pulled a goal back after 42 minutes. Whelpdale found Kendall, who got a little lucky with the ball's bounce inside the Dartford box. With the goal at his mercy, he pulled the trigger, only for Reice Charles-Cook to pull off a superb save.

The goalkeeper was at it again literally seconds later, as he saved a Luke Nippard effort from close range, after good work from Joel Rollinson.

As the second forty-five got underway, any hopes of the Sports rescuing a point were demolished within a five-minute blitz. And, it all started in the 52nd minute. Samir Carruthers linked up well with Calvin Kalala, and the latter sent in a dangerous cross across the Eastbourne goal mouth. The ball found Dinanga, who simply couldn't miss!

Two minutes later saw another dangerous cross come from the other side. Eastbourne couldn't clear and the ball found Kalala, who thumped it home. A further two minutes later saw the French winger net his second of the afternoon (and Dartford's sixth), as he received the ball before firing beyond the hapless Worgan (56).

There was a brief moment between Calvin's goals for manager Steve King to make two substitutions, as both Jordan Wynter and Marcus Dinanga left the field to be replaced by Luke Allen and Jordan Greenidge respectively. Soon after scoring, the Frenchman was replaced by Danny Leonard (58).

Meanwhile, having been absolutely obliterated by the visitors, the Sports tried to get back into the game on the pitch at least. And, after a relatively quiet period with Tom Bonner and Co frustrating them, they found themselves 7-1 down. Another good ball was played over-the-top towards Greenidge, who calmly ran into the box before slotting the ball beyond Worgan (74).

Eastbourne did pull a goal back with ten minutes remaining, however, as a Whelpdale cross ricocheted off of Kristian Campbell, leaving Charles-Cook with no chance, but that was of little consolation or relevance.

The result sees Dartford end the regular season on a high, having registered thirteen goals in the last two games on the road. Taking into consideration other results, Tom Bonner and Co will now entertain Chippenham Town in the play-off Quarter Final at Bericote Powerhouse Princes Park on Thursday evening, after finishing the season in a strong fourth position.

TEAMS

EASTBOURNE BOROUGH: Lee Worgan, Jake Elliott, Jack Currie, Luke Nippard, Mitch Dickenson, Joel Rollinson, James Hammond, Charlie Walker ©, Chris Whelpdale, Trent Mahorn, Charley Kendall.

SUBSTITUTES: Greg Luer, Kai Woollard-Innocent, Leone Gravata, Jaden Perez, Gregor Shaw.

DARTFORD: Reice Charles-Cook, Jordan Wynter, Kristian Campbell, Olumide Durojaiye, Kory Roberts, Tom Bonner ©, Jack Jebb, Samir Carruthers, Marcus Dinanga, Calvin Kalala, Dan Roberts.

SUBSTITUTES: Jake Robinson, Ade Azeez, Danny Leonard, Luke Allen, Jordan Greenidge.

By Chris Palmer