

DARTFORD 2 CHESHUNT 1

A second brace from Pierre Fonkeu in as many games was enough to see off a spirited Cheshunt side at Bericote Powerhouse Princes Park.

As 922 supporters braved the excessive heat, it was the Ambers who raced out of the blocks as the referee got proceedings underway. And, the lively Joe Re forced Dan Wilks into a save as early as the third minute.

However after ten minutes, the hosts began to assert their authority on the game, as the midfield trio of Samir Carruthers, Luke Allen, and Keiran Murtagh set about dominating the middle areas. This allowed the attackers of Luke Coulson, Davide Rodari, and Pierre Fonkeu to begin seeking out the space afforded them as the visitors chased the ball.

As Coulson and Rodari combined well during the opening exchanges, Dayshonne Golding was trying to make a nuisance of himself at the other end. However, he couldn't get the better of make-shift left-back Sam Odaudu, who made an excellent challenge to thwart the Cheshunt player after 18 minutes.

The Darts' pressure almost paid off after 21 minutes, when Coulson and Rodari combined once again to almost carve out an opening. The move, initially set in motion by the outstanding Samir Carruthers, saw the midfielder find Coulson with a neat pass who, in turn, found Rodari. The latter then found Luke Allen inside the box, but the ball was a little too high for the Dartford midfielder to control and Cheshunt breathed a sigh of relief.

Referee, Mr Farai Hallam, stopped play for a drinks break at the midpoint of the half because of the heat. And once play resumed, Rodari forced Preston Edwards into a fine save with his 25th minute strike.

But, three minutes later saw the Cheshunt goalkeeper picking the ball out of his net, after Pierre Fonkeu had opened the scoring with a delightful effort from just inside the box.

As the second-half began, the Dartford number sixteen came agonisingly close within a minute, as his delightful low drive struck the inside of Edwards' far post, only to ricochet to safety!

The visitors weren't going to go quietly though, and Golding forced Dan Wilks into action once again with a powerful drive from just outside the Dartford box (48).

Then, just as it seemed that the Ambers were pulling themselves back into the game, the Dartford attack had other ideas. And, once again it was Carruthers who started the move with a delightful flick towards Coulson. Coulson raced forwards, crossed into the crowded box, and there was Fonkeu to double his side's advantage and take his goal tally to four in two games (58).

With another water break in the 70th minute, as well as both sides using all of their allocated substitutions, opportunities for more goals were few and far between until late on. And, it would be

Luke Coulson who'd come close to adding a third for the hosts after getting on the end of a Keiran Murtagh pass in the 77th minute. Unfortunately, he couldn't quite get a shot away.

The changes in personnel involved Maxwell Statham for Samir Carruthers, Dan Roberts for Luke Coulson, and Alex Wall for Davide Rodari. Meanwhile, Cheshunt's changes involved Sam Anderson for Taylor Miles, Isaac Newton for Reece Beckles Richards, and Olamide Olareweju for Taylor McKenzie.

The visitors did at least get on the scoresheet via a neat solo effort from Golding, who netted from a tight angle in the 90th minute. However, it was nothing more than a consolation goal, as the damage had already been done.

Despite the heat, both sides put on an entertaining game in which it was a little difficult to pick out a Man of The Match from Alan Dowson's men. In the end, the performance of Samir Carruthers was enough to ensure that he was the worthy recipient.

TEAMS

DARTFORD: Dan Wilks, Jordan Wynter, Samir Carruthers, Connor Essam, Tom Bonner ©, Luke Coulson, Luke Allen, Keiran Murtagh, Davide Rodari, Pierre Fonkeu, Sam Odaudu.

SUBSTITUTES: Marvin Herschel, Alex Wall, Maxwell Statham, Tom Wray, Dan Roberts.

CHESHUNT: Preston Edwards, Enoch Eongo, Chevron McLean, Taylor Miles, Taylor McKenzie, Raul Dasilva, Reece Beckles Richards, Joe Re, Rowan Liburd, Dayshonne Golding, Jamie Reynolds.

SUBSTITUTES: Olamide Olareweju, Brandon Adams, Isaac Newton, Sam Anderson, George Marsh.

By Chris Palmer