

TAUNTON TOWN 2 DARTFORD 1

Dartford suffered back-to-back defeats, as Taunton Town came from behind to secure their first win of the season in front of 743 supporters at The Cygnet Health Care Stadium.

It was a relatively even first few minutes, as both sides began cautiously in Somerset. Yet, it was The Peacocks who created the first real opportunity after five minutes. Having drawn the foul, Lloyd James' free-kick was headed back across the Dartford box by Nick Grimes. Nat Jarvis read it well, but fired over the top of Dan Wilks' crossbar, sending an early warning to the Dartford defence.

The hosts thought they'd taken the lead on twelve minutes after Joe Guest had scored with Wilks floored. However the referee, Mr Liam Corbett, disagreed and booked Nick McCootie for a foul on the Dartford goalkeeper.

Dartford midfielder, Luke Allen, then saw his driving shot from the edge of the Taunton box blocked (18), before the aforementioned McCootie's afternoon finished early. In stretching for a high ball, the Peacock was clearly uncomfortable and had to be replaced with Dave Sims-Burgess after just twenty minutes.

Both goalkeepers were called into action in quick succession as, first Jack Bycroft saved a Luke Coulson effort (21), and then Wilks saved an effort from Jarvis (22).

Bycroft would then make a good save to prevent Davide Rodari from opening the scoring (30), before the Dartford attacker actually had the ball in the back of the net, only for it to be chalked off for offside (36).

Just when the hosts thought they'd dealt with the Swiss-Italian forward, they gifted him his goal! Bycroft and Dan Ball got a little confused as to who was doing what, and Rodari capitalised to break the deadlock and score his second goal in as many games (38).

The Peacocks responded and came close with two minutes of the half remaining. Ollie Chamberlain and Jake Wannell combined, but the latter's strike flew low and wide of Wilks' upright.

Manager, Alan Dowson, was forced into an early change at the start of the second-half, as Dan Roberts came on for Davide Rodari.

Dowson's side looked more assertive at the restart, as both Pierre Fonkeu (46) and Luke Coulson (48) came close.

The hosts, meanwhile, made their second change in personnel after 53 minutes, when Joe Budd was replaced by Ross Stearn. Their final change would come after 68 minutes, when Harry Warwick replaced Nat Jarvis.

And, the tactics almost paid dividends immediately when the Dartford defence had to make the block to prevent Stearn from levelling the score (56).

It was then Luke Allen's turn to take centre stage after the hour, well, almost...! First, the midfielder's long-range drive was straight down Bycroft's throat (62), before his delightfully cheeky lob was somehow claimed by the goalkeeper in the nick of time (64). Then another long-range effort of his was once again collected by the goalkeeper (67)!

The Darts came close once again after 73 minutes when Allen's excellent interception enabled his teammates to launch a counter-attack. Luke Coulson released Dan Roberts, who then tested Bycroft from a tight angle.

Unfortunately, the Darts were made to pay for those missed opportunities because, by the 76th minute, The Peacocks were level via a Sims-Burgess strike. And, the recently promoted side were ahead four minutes later via Ross Stearn!

Dartford responded by bringing on Alex Wall for Luke Coulson, as well as Kristian Campbell for Jordan Wynter. However, the hosts held on to record their first victory of the season.

So, Dartford's long road trip to Somerset ended with a disappointing defeat. But, be ensured that Tom Bonner and Co will be determined to put things right next weekend.

TEAMS

TAUNTON TOWN: Jack Bycroft, Joe Budd, Jay Foulston, Nick Grimes (c), Dan Ball, Jake Wannell, Ollie Chamberlain, Lloyd James, Nat Jarvis, Nick McCootie, Joe Guest.

SUBSTITUTES: Harry Warwick, Ross Stearn, Dave Sims-Burgess, Dylan Morgan, Lee Lucas.

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

SUBSTITUTES: Kristian Campbell, Alex Wall, Maxwell Statham, Dan Roberts, Tom Wray.

By Chris Palmer