

DARTFORD 1 WORTHING 2

Dartford's miserable run of results continued, as they fell to a third consecutive defeat at the hands of Worthing at Bericote Powerhouse Princes Park in front of 967 supporters.

With injuries mounting up, manager Alan Dowson was forced to shuffle his squad and give full debuts to two new loan signings. Midfielder, Adam Lovatt, arrived from Sutton United and slotted straight into the midfield at the expense of Keiran Murtagh. He was joined by fellow debutant, goalkeeper Joe Young, who arrived from Wolves on loan for the injured Dan Wilks.

Other changes include the return of Kristian Campbell and Alex Wall, while Maxwell Statham also started. Jordan Wynter, Keiran Murtagh, and Sam Odaudu moved to the substitute's bench, while Davide Rodari joined Wilks in the treatment room.

Dartford started well once again, and only a fine challenge by Worthing's Captain Aarran Racine prevented Luke Coulson from striking at goal as early as the second minute.

Then, after forcing a couple of corners, the hosts were awarded for their early pressure. Samir Carruthers delivered the set-piece, finding the head of Connor Essam, who headed home into the top corner (9).

Four minutes later saw Essam at work again only, this time he made a superb challenge to prevent the lively Callum Kealy from scoring at the other end.

With the visitors in control and searching for the equaliser, Carruthers was called into action with a brilliantly timed challenge inside the Dartford box to prevent another Worthing attack (18).

As Worthing continued to press forwards, Tom Bonner and Co were defending resolutely without seeing much of the ball. When the hosts did get hold of the ball, opportunities to get forward were few and far between, such was the momentum behind The Rebels.

Yet, when an opportunity did present itself, goalkeeper Harrison Male was in the way... such as in the 34th minute when Carruthers intercepted the ball and found Adam Lovatt. The debutant found space from distance and fired a delightful effort towards goal, only for Hale to save it!

Four minutes before that almost saw the visitors level the score after Reece Myles-Meekums got the better of Campbell on the right-flank to send in a dangerous cross. The ball found Sammie McLeod, who'd snuck inside unannounced, but drilled his shot wide of Young's upright (34).

Right before the break saw an excellent interception by Campbell trigger a swift counter-attack by the hosts. Pierre Fonkeu raced onto a deep ball into the box, which also saw Male rush out. Both players collided in a 50/50 challenge but, bizarrely, referee Mr Aaron Farmer booked the Dartford striker!

The Darts started the second forty-five on the front-foot, as Luke Coulson forced a corner after his strike was deflected wide (48). Unfortunately, the corner came to nothing and Worthing were level three minutes later. Callum Kealy was the scorer, as he managed to control the ball inside the box before twisting round and firing into the bottom corner (51).

After 55 minutes, Alex Wall was booked by Mr Farmer after yet another seemingly harmless challenge. That was the striker's last contribution as he made way for Sam Odaudu.

No matter how much they tried, the Dartford attackers just couldn't break through the Worthing defence, which was being marshalled by Aarran Racine. When progress was being made, though, the visitors resorted to fouls, such as the one on Pierre Fonkeu after 64 minutes. The free-kick was awarded on the edge of the box, but still no yellow card produced for the visitors...! Kristian Campbell stepped up to take the set-piece, which curled over the defensive wall, but crashed back off the crossbar.

Alan Dowson responded with his final two remaining substitutions in the 66th minute, as Dan Roberts and Keiran Murtagh replaced Luke Coulson and Adam Lovatt, but there was just no way through for his side.

The excellent Campbell and Carruthers were both booked after 75 minutes, before the Dartford number three almost stole the show late on. His delightful flick left Cameron Tutt for dead and the Dartford player through. But, his right-footed strike was routinely saved by Male (84).

Unfortunately, deep into stoppage time, Joel Colbran stole the show instead. With the game heading to a deserved draw, the Darts failed to clear a goal-mouth scramble, and Colbran's effort deflected into the back of the net and the visitors snatched the points.

Kristian Campbell's performance earned him the Man of The Match award, but that'll be of little satisfaction to him after his side lost a second game in a row at Bericote Powerhouse Princes Park. His teammates and him will be intending to put things right at Hemel Hempstead on Monday.

TEAMS

DARTFORD: Joe Young, Kristian Campbell, Samir Carruthers, Connor Essam, Tom Bonner (c), Luke Coulson, Luke Allen, Alex Wall, Maxwell Statham, Adam Lovatt, Pierre Fonkeu.

SUBSTITUTES: Jordan Wynter, Keiran Murtagh, Tom Wray, Dan Roberts, Sam Odaudu.

WORTHING: Harrison Male, Joel Colbran, Cameron Tutt, Danny Barker, Aarran Racine (c), Daniel Bowry, Kane Wills, Ollie Pearce, Callum Kealy, Reece Myles-Meekums, Sammie McLeod.

SUBSTITUTES: Adam Adam, Joe Rye, James Beresford, Conrad Honore, Modou-Lamin Jammeh.

By Chris Palmer