

HEMEL HEMPSTEAD 0 DARTFORD 2

Dartford returned to winning ways, as Samir Carruthers scored a superb second-half brace against his former employers at Vauxhall Road.

On an overcast and breezy afternoon, there was absolutely nothing to separate the two sides, as they cancelled each other out for the opening forty-five minutes.

In fact, the only things worth mentioning were when referee, Mr Callum Walchester, booked Bradley Webb for a late challenge on Pierre Fonkeu after sixteen minutes. Then Kory Roberts fouled Keiran Murtagh after 26 minutes, leaving the Dartford midfielder needing treatment.

Shortly after, Josh Castiglione set up Ogo Obi, but the forward blasted the ball over Joe Young's crossbar (32), summing up the state of play for both teams throughout the first-half.

After such a tight forty-five minutes, the game exploded into life just two minutes after the restart... well, the Darts exploded into life! A delightful move along the left-flank, ended up at the feet of Samir Carruthers. He drove into the box before unleashing a beautiful strike which curled beyond ex-Dartford goalkeeper, Craig King, and into the top corner.

The Tudors tried to respond via the lively Obi, but his first effort flew across the face of Joe Young's goal (49), before he forced a routine save out of the Dartford goalkeeper a minute later.

As the hosts pressed forward, the Dartford defence remained focused to prevent any of the Hemel forward line from threatening their goal.

Samir Carruthers was then booked for a late challenge (55), before the Darts were awarded a free-kick for a foul on Adam Lovatt on the edge of the box. Up stepped Carruthers to send the ball straight over the defensive wall and into the back of the net (64).

Manager, Alan Dowson, responded immediately by making his first substitution of the afternoon by bringing on Luke Allen for the Dartford number four (65). His other changes included Sam Odaudu on for Adam Lovatt (68), and Dan Roberts replaced Luke Coulson (76).

Meanwhile, The Tudors brought on Craig Fasanmade for Alfie Williams (60), Charlee Hughes for Bayley Brown (68), and Jordan Greenidge for Ogo Obi (73).

Returning to the action, Luke Coulson almost added a third for the Darts with his last kick before being replaced by Dan Roberts. He'd managed to sneak through the left-side of the Hemel defence unnoticed, but his effort from a tight angle was just wide of the far post (75)

Kristian Campbell also had an opportunity to score late on after being put through by Keiran Murtagh, but his effort was wide of Craig King's goal (85).

Overall, this wasn't the prettiest of games to watch. But, two special goals from Dartford's number four set them on the way to an important victory, which has ended that three-game losing run. And, the result sees Alan Dowson's side climb back into the top ten of the National League South table.

TEAMS

HEMEL HEMPSTEAD: Craig King, Josh Castiglione, Bradley Webb, Godfrey Poku (c), Jack Westbrook, Kory Roberts, Dara Dada, Ryan Hope, Ogo Obi, Alfie Williams, Bayley Brown.

SUBSTITUTES: Cole Dasilva, Craig Fasanmade, Jordan Greenidge, Charlee Hughes, David Saunders.

DARTFORD: Joe Young, Jordan Wynter, Kristian Campbell, Samir Carruthers, Connor Essam, Tom Bonner (c), Luke Coulson, Keiran Murtagh, Maxwell Statham, Adam Lovatt, Pierre Fonkeu.

SUBSTITUTES: Luke Allen, Tom Wray, Dan Roberts, Sam Odaudu, Marvin Herschel.

By Chris Palmer