

DARTFORD 1 BECKENHAM TOWN 2

Dartford's hopes of an FA Cup run came to a shuddering halt at the first hurdle, as Isthmian League Division One South East side Beckenham Town took the spoils in a frustrating game at Bericote Powerhouse Princes Park.

After both sides had lined up, referee Mr Matthew Norton signalled a minute's silence in honour of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, which was humbly respected by the 674 supporters in attendance for this FA Cup Second Qualifying Round.

The Darts had striker Charlie Sheringham back in the starting eleven after a period out due to injury. They also had a new signing featuring on the substitute's bench, having announced the signing of former Chelsea and West Ham youth player Daniel Jinadu earlier in the day. The former Nigerian U17 International goalkeeper has been signed from Barnsley on a free transfer.

The game started relatively evenly, but it was Beckenham who created the first opportunity when the ball ricocheted kindly for Alfie Bloomfield. Thankfully, his strike was blocked well by Maxwell Statham (2). The Darts responded immediately with an attack along the right-flank, but Samir Carruthers' effort from distance failed to trouble goalkeeper Nick Blue (3).

The goalkeeper would then injure himself after punching Luke Coulson's corner clear in the eighth minute, which required him needing lengthy treatment. Once play resumed, the visitors almost took the lead after Coulson lost out to Harvey Brand. The Beckenham right-back was subsequently through and, creating space for himself, shot straight at Joe Young (13).

The visitors didn't rue the miss for long though, because they were ahead a minute later. They were awarded a corner, which Freddie Nyhus sent towards the far post. Captain Danny Waldren got to the ball first with a scissor-kick, which Brand got on the end of to head home (15).

Dartford retaliated, but just couldn't find that vital opening due to a commanding Becks defence and tactics which frustrated the hosts. When attacks did look promising, the goalkeeper or defence prevented an equaliser, such as Pierre Fonkeu's 22nd minute strike and Carruthers' free-kick just after the half-hour mark.

Meanwhile, the visitors were in control of proceedings but would lose Luke Hedges to an injury before the break (43). His replacement was Jaramaria Brissett who'd play a big part in the game late on... Dartford had a golden opportunity to equalise right before the break, but Fonkeu's effort was easily dealt with.

The hosts brought on Kristian Campbell for Jordan Wynter after the break, and that substitution would be followed by Davide Rodari replacing Adam Lovatt (55) and Kwaku Frimpong on for Pierre Fonkeu (64).

However, disaster struck Alan Dowson's side after that final change in personnel, because Luke Coulson pulled up with an injury. The winger tried desperately to continue, but his efforts were in vain and Dartford had to finish the remainder of the game with ten men.

Returning to the action on the pitch previously, Mr Norton booked Carruthers for pulling his man back to prevent a counter-attack (51), before the hosts finally got themselves level.

In what would prove to be Coulson's last action, he sent in a dangerous corner which was knocked down by Connor Essam towards Charlie Sheringham. And, the big striker couldn't miss to net his first goal of the season after 56 minutes.

Unfortunately, the Dartford number nineteen was then booked for a late challenge on Rob Carter (61), before the visitors made a swift double substitution. Nick Curran was replaced by Steve Townsend (64) and Callum Henry went off for Mudiaga Wanahgo (66).

As the hosts searched for the winning goal, the visitors seemed content on trying to launch the counter-attack, while frustrating the Darts as much as possible. And unfortunately, with eight minutes remaining the Becks re-took the lead via a Rob Carter 12-yard volley following a corner.

The visitors almost extended their lead after 87 minutes when Louis Theophanous forced Joe Young into a superb save, before the Darts almost levelled the score sixty seconds later! Nick Blue managed to save Tom Bonner's point-blank header, but didn't make the ball safe. Connor Essam got to it first, but his strike was somehow cleared off the line!

With a minute of the ninety left, Kwaku Frimpong challenged Jaramaria Brissett with a late lunge. And, although the Dartford midfielder won the ball, he took his opponent out as well, leaving Mr Norton with no choice but to send the Dart off.

Now down to nine men and with very little time left, an extremely difficult task became impossible and Beckenham Town went into the hat for the next round at the Darts' expense. Tom Bonner was given the Man of The Match award, but that will be of little consolation for the Dartford Captain.

TEAMS

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

SUBSTITUTES: Kristian Campbell, Luke Allen, Davide Rodari, Daniel Jinadu, Dan Roberts, Marvin Herschel, Kwaku Frimpong.

BECKENHAM TOWN: Nick Blue, Harvey Brand, Archie Johnson, Nick Curran, Callum Henry, Rob Carter, Freddie Nyhus, Daniel Waldren (c), Louie Theophanous, Alfie Bloomfield, Luke Hedges.

SUBSTITUTES: Mudiaga Wanahgo, Ishmael Erskine, Steve Townsend, Jaramaria Brissett, Kelvin Hernandez, Shameek Farrell.

By Chris Palmer