

# MATCH REPORT

## Pre-season Friendly

21st August 2022

### Coulsdon Athletic FC 2 – 1 Old Coulsdon Eagles FC

A new season, and up a level from youth football to now managing the Coulsdon Athletic senior team with Moz. This season we will be playing in Div 3 of the Redhill and District league, so time to prepare.

A few of the lads came up from the 18's but we have put together a squad of some ex-players from the last senior team along some new players. Having spent the last few weeks training and meeting up twice a week, we had got to know each other well, and we consisted of some great characters.

Today saw us playing a pre-season friendly with Old Coulsdon, which would be a good test as they were the division above us, so why pick easy games, eh?! We still had players on holiday, but we had enough to field a decent team and to see how we could challenge a team in the league above.

We started the match quite comfortably and although our oppo's enjoyed a bit of possession, we were keeping a good shape, and in fact our oppo's were quickly resorting Route One to try and beat our compactness. The ball over the top was not really bothering us to be fair, so our stand in keeper Raff was not really being worked too hard.

We then started to play our passing game, bring width to our possession, and we had Liam start at right back and he was playing well, and on about 15 minutes, Liam released our very lively ring winger Ry with a great low through ball, and Ry burst into the box. In trying to be unselfish, he tried to square the ball to our centre forward Alfie, but the ball got cut out for a corner. Just maybe needed to maybe a bit more selfish, but we were unlucky not to be 1-0 up.

After absorbing a few more long balls, and Johnny and Billy cutting them out comfortably, we were growing into the game. George was lively at left back and working the left side well with Adz. Our skipper Haz was organising the midfield well and Gallon and Nath were solid in there. We still carved out further chances with some great passing moves see Nath releasing Alfie, but just as he was about to pull the trigger, a Moore-like tackle to prevent us taking the lead.

A further passing move through Haz released Ry on the right wing, and he squared a beautiful ball across the box to an unmarked Adz but he couldn't get his body position right and the connection just took the ball wide of the post! So close!

Just before half time we conceded a corner. The corner was swung in and we didn't deal with it efficiently, it bounced in the box, the oppo player took control and with a neat turn, smashed it goalward and it flew past Raff into the onion bag. From not actually having to make a clear save all half, we were 1-0 down!!

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The ball was taken to centre spot and the ref blew the whistle. Absolutely gutting, but we had to be positive about how well we were playing. Especially against a team from the division above - they certainly weren't enjoying the first half although they were 1-0 up.

A pre-season match meant that we had a couple of players struggling out there so we made some changes at half time. Nath and Gallon took a break, which meant that Lige and Shawn took up places deep in midfield as a pairing.

All that was needed at half time was a reminder that we were the better team and if we focused on our game, we could get back in this. Also it was important to remember our defensive duties and start to win a bit more in the air with the high balls that were being played, which could be our only criticism. We settled quickly, even with the changes and were playing some nice stuff. Being a bit short on personnel there was a lot of rotation, and Haz was now leading the line up top with Adz and Alfie resting. That meant Nath tucking into the centre of defence and ever vocal Johnny now at left back. George was now playing higher up the pitch and doing well. We kept moving the ball well and spreading the play wide. Ry was now resting and Gallon was back on the pitch.

We built an attack with the ball moved through the centre of the pitch, which saw Haz chip the ball forward and with Gallon winning the ball in the air, he flicked on a header with a ball for Georgie to run on to nicely and with a one on one with the keeper, George sent the ball low towards the goal and we had finally got level! All square now, 1-1 and exactly what we deserved!

We then made sure everyone got valuable minutes, and although sore, Ry made his way back on to the pitch. On the wing he had the beating of their left back every time he ran at him, and we wanted to exploit that again.

We were moving the ball really well now and finding a rhythm, and we were not forgetting our defensive duties, and we were staying compact without the ball - it was very good to see so early in pre-season.

The ball then got moved through the lines and with a through ball from Haz, he found Ry. Ry made a mazy run into the box. The defender thought he had everything under control, but Ry had other ideas. He moved the ball quickly to the right, cut back on his left and unleashed a shot from just inside the box, high to the keepers right. When I say unleashed a shot. I mean a rocket. An unstoppable drive. The keeper had no chance. Bosh! In off the bar 2-1 to the might of CAFC!!

We then played a solid last 10 minutes. A loud last ten minutes. It was great to hear. Billy was solid, with Johnny and Nath both harassing the oppo at every opportunity and making sure any ideas of an attack were snuffed out quickly. The ever running and battling Liam was doing a fantastic job at right back - and now winning balls in the air, balls he had no right to win. A man of the match performance to be fair.

It was great to see a performance like that with every player contributing and lastly a massive thanks to Raff for standing in whilst Xander is away on holiday.

Final Score: CAFC 2 Old Coulsdon 1

Goals: George and Ry