

EAST GRINSTEAD TOWN 3, PHOENIX SPORTS 2

By Bruce Talbot

Wasps set up an intriguing FA Cup first qualifying round tie against Sussex rivals Worthing next Tuesday after Leigh Dynan's new-look team started the season with a win more convincing than the result suggests.

Phoenix scored twice in the last ten minutes to the frustration of Dynan, whose team had enough chances to have won by a heftier margin. "People will look at the score and think it was closer than it was," he said. "Phoenix are a good side but I thought it was a comfortable win for us. We're disappointed to have conceded two goals, and there are things where we need to do better, but we're a work in progress and will improve."

Dynan has put together a squad of players with vast experience at a higher level and one of his recruits, striker Louie Theophanous, took just six minutes to break the deadlock with a delicious free kick into the top corner from the left-hand edge of the box.

There was a moment of alarm when referee John Pike pointed to the spot but after consulting with his assistant changed his mind, ruling that Jay Gasson won the ball when he challenged Kweku Ansah in the box.

Wasps doubled their lead in the 35th minute. Danny Waldren's pass found the dangerous Jerry Amoo and although Phoenix keeper Max Goodman parried his shot, Theophanous was on hand to fire in the loose ball.

Amoo made it 3-0 on the stroke of half-time when he closed down Goodman, won the race to the loose ball and had the simple task of rolling it into an empty net.

A crowd of 208 – the maximum allowed under Covid-19 protocols – knew they would be celebrating Wasps' first win at the OHOB Community Stadium since March 2018 and in the second half Grinstead had enough chances to embellish the scoreline. Glenn Wilson had a shot cleared off the line and substitute Gil Carvalho twice hit the post either side of goals from Jeff Duah-Kessie and, deep into added time, James Dyer for the hardworking visitors.

Not a flawless performance by any means from the Wasps, but more than a glimpse of what their supporters can expect this season.

Wasps: Boyle, Clohessy, Harrison, Beckles, Gasson, Wilson, Amoo (Carvalho 81), Waldren, Theophanous, Uchechi (Davies 53), Uwesu (Thompson 77).