

East Grinstead Town 3v3 Worthing

East Grinstead won 4-3 on penalties

Match Report by Stewart Ward

An outstanding second half performance ultimately ensured the Wasps progress to the 2nd Qualifying Round of the FA Cup after a nail biting penalty shootout.

On a thrilling night of cup football at the newly named O'Halloran & O'Brien Community Stadium Grinstead twice came back from a two goal deficit, all this against a side plying their trade in the league above and who were 7 points clear at the top before being curtailed in March

It was a relatively quiet opening to the match before Worthing took the lead in the 24th minute through an outstanding free-kick from Jesse Starkey after Ricky Aguiar was brought down on the edge of the box by Jerome Beckles. The free kick flew over Jacob Adams and into the top right hand corner.

Two minutes before half time, Worthing doubled their advantage when Marvin Armstrong fired a low shot which was parried by Adams, but Mo Diallo was on hand to smash the ball into an empty net.

It looked a long way back from here for the Wasps considering the quality of the opposition but they came out a different side in the second half and took the game to the opposition. Some credit for this must go to manger Leigh Dynan with a tactical change at half time replacing Gil Carvalho, who had struggled to make an impact on the game, with Daniel Thompson and moving Leo Theophanous to the left as part of front three with Jerry Amoo on the right.

In the 52nd minute, East Grinstead's bright start to the half was rewarded when a cross from the right was met by a diving header from Michael Uwezu, initially saved by Jack Fagan, but Louis Theophanous was on hand to tap in the rebound to half the lead.

Worthing were rattled and Grinstead buoyed by the goal continued to dominate the visitors. Three minutes later, Grinstead thought they had grabbed the equaliser when Uwezu turned in another rebound after a fantastic save from Fagan, but the lineman's flag was raised to rule it out.

They were then denied by the woodwork when Glenn Wilson fired a dipping volley from 30 yards out which beat Fagan but cannoned back off the bar.

Despite their domination with Grinstead pushing forward they were also going to be susceptible on the break and a swift counter attacking move involving substitute Shaquille Gwengue found Dajon Golding in the area, who fired beyond Adams to put Worthing 3-1 up, in the 73rd minute, and that looked like game over

Grinstead continued to attack however and still felt they could get something from the game, and with ten minutes remaining they were back in it, Theophanous expertly finishing beyond Fagan after being released with a pin-point through ball.

Four minutes later, the comeback was complete, Daniel Thompson who had an outstanding second half found himself unmarked in the penalty area and headed a bullet header past Fagan from 12 yards.

Grinstead went looking for the winner and Theophanous nearly provided it when he bulldozed his way past two defenders before narrowly shooting wide of the far post from a tight angle.

A terrific second half performance resulting in the game going straight to penalties:

Ollie Pearce and Joel Colbran were on target for Worthing, as were Sean Clohessey and Thompson for East Grinstead.

Marvin Armstrong then stepped up Worthing, but saw his effort saved by Adams, and Amoo fired beyond Fagan in response to put the Wasps ahead.

Golding netted the Reds' next penalty, as did Danny Waldren for Grinstead to mount the pressure on Worthing.

The pressure told. Rickey Aguiar need to score to keep Worthing in the cup, but he fired his effort over the bar to send East Grinstead through to the next round of the competition amid great scenes at the OHOB. Fantastic entertainment for the 273 in attendance.

Team: Adams, Clohessy, Harrison, Beckles, Gasson, Wilson, Amoo, Waldren, Theophanous, Carvalho(Thompson 46), Uwezu (Uchechi 65). Subs not used: Davies, Reardon, Smith, Rodd, Abukar.