

<http://www.dartfordfc.co.uk/reserves.htm>

Henno's Notes

Sun 09/11/2008 21:08

The last four weeks have proved difficult and have probably been the most frustrating time as manager of the reserves since I took over. The performances we have put in have been decent, but the results have unfortunately not reflected what I think we have deserved. We lost 1-0 at home to Whitstable, a game we dominated, and then 1-0 away to Welling in the floodlit trophy, who were represented by a number of first team squad players. However last Saturday we beat Ramsgate 3-1 at home in the league cup, having had a player sent off after only thirty minutes when the score was 1-1. In between these games we had the pleasure of a journey away to Folkestone where the game was abandoned at half time due to a waterlogged pitch.

On the playing front my top scorer Ashley Dunkley tore his knee ligaments during the game with Whitstable and won't be available until Xmas at the earliest, with another forward, Reiss St. Hilaire, a long term injury also. My remaining forward, James Taylor, has joined Chatham on a month's loan, with the opportunity of first team football, giving him useful experience and hopefully Tony confidence that he is ready to make the step up to our first team should he need him.

Unfortunately two of my players are due to start thirty five day bans this month for red cards they have received, which in hindsight they both regret their actions, but the word I used earlier, frustration, got the better of them in the heat of the moment and I'm afraid with youth comes inexperience.

Therefore, all things considered, things haven't been dull, and while I may have spent the last month pulling chunks out of my hair at times, the good moments out weigh the bad every time.

Thanks for your support

Henno

23 October 2008 09:12

Looking back over the first eleven games of the season our record shows five wins, three draws, two defeats (both 3-2 away to the current two top teams), and a further draw after extra time which led to losing unfortunately on penalties. We have used during those games in excess of thirty different players, ranging from the under 18's, first team, squad players and trialists.

I think it is important to realise that the reserve team is like no other team within the club. Other teams have looked to add quality to what was already a good squad by adding maybe two or three additional players. As you are all aware we took a decision to release the majority of last year's successful team when we could have retained them on false promises, which has meant putting together almost a complete new squad. In our last two games for example, only one player featured in each match who played last year, therefore when I look at other teams who we have played so far this year and recognise most of their players from last season, I think the decision taken by the Dartford management team to start again with fresh players is the right one, giving the opportunity for many who might not have the chance to progress from within or through trials.

I am personally having to be more patient and understanding with players and the mistakes that have been happening, as we don't have the experience within the squad that we had last year, and I am trying to be constructive with any criticisms that I make. We are trying to play football in the right way and we are trying to install the right qualities and habits into the players, but with sometimes five or six personnel changes every game it isn't always going to be perfect and I hope that people watching the games are understanding of that fact.

Thank you to all of the supporters who have followed us in the last week especially, all the players and staff really appreciate it.

Henno

6 October 2008 16:16

Looking back over the last few weeks and the results achieved in that time, I am pleased with the progress made so far by what is still, a very new team. In our last six games we have won three and drawn three, although on Saturday our draw with Margate after extra time did lead to us losing on penalties. Having started the match without Sean Eferakho and James Taylor, both of whom were called into the first team squad, we unfortunately lost Danny Baigent at half time who went to hospital with a suspected broken bone in his wrist, then two further players with muscle injuries after an hour. We were already missing Luke Smith who watched the game on crutches as a result of an injury sustained from the week before at Maidstone, so in the circumstances, the players worked hard for the draw, and after two hours of football and I had no complaints afterwards although everyone was obviously disappointed to lose in the manner we did.

Steve and I have discussed at some length our targets for this year and we feel that this season we will be looking to use more players in the squad, and rotate the side more than we did last year, as we are keen to give as many players as possible the opportunity to show if they are capable of playing at this level, and beyond into the first team. This will mean that results will possibly suffer as the team will change from week to week, but we are prepared to sacrifice results in our aim to provide players of the required standard. This has been emphasized to the players and it is up to them to show us that they should be part of our squad and not waste the opportunity that they have been given. As I mentioned earlier, we now have James Taylor and Sean knocking on the first team door, with Deren pushing hard and improving all the time, Danny Baigent having sat on the bench in the F.A. cup, and also Danny Crouch not too far away. Therefore we can show that there are opportunities for those and others to progress from within the club, which is so important to the future success of Dartford FC, as I feel many supporters would love to see home grown talent go on to represent the club at first team level.

Thank you for your continued support.

Henno

15 September 2008 14:23

It would be fair to say that following the success of last years reserve team, it was always going to be a hard act to follow. Having only retained four players from last season, and then to have lost my newly appointed captain Luke May after only one game, has meant that the first few weeks have certainly been tough. However, having looked at what feels like hundreds of players during the summer, I now feel that the current squad are reaching the level and standards required to support and compete for first team opportunities as and when they come.

The biggest difficulty is trying to have a balance between giving young players opportunities, while at the same time having experience and knowledge of how to deal with opponents who are quite happy to put young talent into row Z. This year more young players will be given that opportunity, as was the case last week when two seventeen year olds and one sixteen year old from Andy's under eighteen team played and did very well at Lordswood, a game we won 3- 2. This followed a 1- 1 draw the previous Saturday at home to Maidstone, a result I was especially pleased with as their team was most of the players who we had played last year and were as a result, very strong opponents.

Therefore in summary, I am optimistic that the reserve team will this season progress the young talent currently within the club, and if by giving players that opportunity means that we are maybe not as successful in terms of results as we were last year, I think that this year's success will be measured in many other ways.

Your support towards me and the players since I have been manager has been fantastic and I am most grateful to you all, we all appreciate it and I hope to see as many of you as possible at our games, subject to first team commitments of course.

Best Wishes

Henno