

## RAF FA Veterans vs St Anne's (Wirral) Vets XI, 1 Dec 18 played at The Oldham Academy North



And so, we came to pass...or words to that effect. Last game before Christmas was at Oldham Academy North near Bury and as is the wont of that area of the North West, it was raining. The family were a bit thin on the ground regarding numbers but hopefully the skill and know-how of those that were there would keep the momentum of this season going forward. The opposition had stepped in at the last minute and had travelled from Merseyside for the game so a massive thank you to the players and staff of St Anne's (Wirral) for agreeing to step in and fulfil the fixture.

Onto the game. SA kick off and it was immediately obvious that despite the change of personnel for the RAF and the lack of numbers, those on the pitch would give it 100% from the off. They chased and harried in all areas of the pitch and did not let the opposition settle for one second. Seddon had the first chance for the boys in blue in the 7th minute but he dragged his left foot shot wide of the far post. Rooney then got into the action with a well hit free kick that the keeper did well to get down low to tip round the post. From the corner the ball found its way to Seddon who blazed over the bar. More pressure from the RAF saw a series of attempts blocked or charged down as the RAF probed for a breakthrough with Watkins, Richards and Macek all being foiled. With fourteen minutes on the clock, the deadlock was broken.

The ball was won in midfield and played out to Macek down the right who crossed infield for Tweedie to strike first time past the helpless keeper. 1-0 RAF. Eight minutes later it was 2-0 when Tweedie got onto a long ball and pulled it back for Watkins who took one touch and rifled it into the back of the net. 2-0 RAF. The RAF extended the lead still further in the 32nd minute when a good interchange of passing from the back through the midfield, saw an angled ball played through to Seddon who chipped the advancing keeper. 3-0 RAF and just two minutes later it's four when a SA defender was caught in possession. The ball was played out to Macek on the right who cut inside and hit a sweet left foot shot that the keeper got a hand to but couldn't keep it out. 4-0 RAF. In the 43rd minute the RAF, who were flying, made it five when another break down the right found its way through to Watkins who struck for his second of the game and it stayed 5-0 till the half time whistle went.



This was a great performance by the Vets full of attacking promise every time they were in possession. It wasn't all one-way traffic but the back four were all playing superbly well, with Macek, McCormick, Stewart and Rooney impressive and the midfield were constantly breaking down any threat of an SA counter. The task the players were set at

half time was simple, go out and match that first half performance.

The boys listened, as straight from the restart, Seddon outsmarted the left back, went round him easily, and crossed for Watkins. His first effort was brilliantly saved by the SA keeper from point blank range but the ball looped up and Watkins made no mistake with his next effort and it's 6-0 RAF and a Johnny Watkins hatrick!! 45 minutes and 10 seconds gone!!

Just five minutes later it's the magnificent 7 when some nice interplay between Seddon and Watkins out on the left sees Seddon continue his run into the box and onto the end of Watkins pass...bang...7-0 RAF. The St Anne's keeper, who had actually played superbly well until this point despite the score line, then became a one man defence. Save after save after save he was single-handedly keeping the RAF out. In the 70th minute, Findler came on at the back for the Vets and we got two more in the next minute!!



Firstly, Tweedie put over a lovely cross that Seddon got to at the far post for his hatrick and then once the RAF had won the ball back, a long ball saw Seddon flick a header over the centre half, out muscle the big defender and smash a shot back across the goal, and the keeper, for his fourth. 9-0 RAF. Still it wasn't over. The RAF continued to cause chaos in the SA area but their keeper was immense until, just before the final whistle, Tweedie got on the end of another Watkins cross and it was 10-0 RAF.



So what can be learnt from a game like this? It wasn't as easy as maybe the report makes it look. This was a tough game with the bare bones of a squad but the players and the system made it look easy. These are good times for the Vets as they are playing with a confidence and a knowledge that the hard work the system we play demands, will bring its reward...and it is. The players, whoever they are, know what they have to do wherever or whenever they are selected and the personnel changes are now looking seamless in terms of the team dynamic. A brilliant performance by all those who were there and we now look forward to our first fixtures of 2019, in Cardiff in January, against HM

Prison Service and the Wales FA.

RAF Representatives: Hancocks, Beattie, Salkeld, Reeves, Bones, Hill, Sheehan, McCormick, Rooney, Macek, Stewart, Bryan, Richards, Watkins, Tweedie, Seddon, Findler

Massive thanks to all the girls who turned up (even if most went shopping as it was too wet to watch), to St Anne's for all they did in such a short time to enable a fixture to go ahead and for donating their subs for the day to our charity collection. Also, to Mr Anthony Hill for stepping in as referee with five minutes notice.

As this was our last game of 2018 and Christmas is approaching fast, The RAF FA Vets family would like to wish you all...

### **A Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year**

...and we'll see you all in January.

Immediately after the game we were hosted at Heyside Cricket Club where the St Anne's keeper was presented with his Man of the Match award and Gaz Seddon was awarded the MoM for the RAF, narrowly beating everyone else in the squad and it was narrowly as ALL were special today. Later in the evening, the family travelled to Ramsbottom to the MouseTrap for a little pre-christmas get together. If you are ever in that area it's a MUST VISIT place and we all had a great night...

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