

RAF Football Association - E-Bulletin

RAF Digby vs RAF Cosford played at Oxford City FC.

15 Oct 2020

The Final of the RAF FA Plate saw RAF Cosford face RAF Digby at the Velocity Stadium, home of Oxford City FC. Conditions for the game were excellent, a pristine 3G pitch, mid-October sun and a slight fresh breeze, the stage was set. The Plate had reached the semi-final stage before all sport was suspended in March due to COVID-19. So, this fixture was a long time coming.

The hum around the pitch pre-match was focused on the strong side fielded by Cosford and the possibility of a double figure score line. Digby however came out of the tunnel looking for an upset. Within 6 minutes Digby's No9 Cpl Richard Bingley found some space inside the box after a promising press forward from the team, his powerful shot glancing just over the cross bar. Moments later the pressure was applied again to Cosford who were yet to find their feet. Max Gaskin surged down the left and peeled a cross into the box towards Lawrie, the Cosford defence stepped up with a crucial clearance by Sal Hill.

Cosford hit back with a quick counter. A string of inch perfect passes up the pitch and clever movement off the ball started to showcase Cosford's skill. A lovely ball was threaded through to Luke Toner, but it was pre-empted by the Digby defence and Toner was caught offside. The next few minutes saw both teams moving the ball around the pitch well and looking hungry to retain possession. Digby was full of confidence but Cosford started to work hard for the opening goal, Bennett and Toner both testing the hands of Luke Baron between the Digby sticks.



Bennett priming his shot.

On the 18th minute Cosford took the lead. Jack Hadden-Becker opened a hole in Digby's defence with a clever turn in the penalty area giving him the space to fire a shot past a stranded Digby goalkeeper. Cosford settled into a comfortable flow and continued to pin Digby in their own half, working the ball well between them Bennett and Toner were beginning to look like a formidable strike force. Toner's great turn of pace and Bennett's tenacity to get on the goal sheet was met by a steadfast Baron in goal, keeping the tally down and Digby in the game. An exciting game was well underway, with both teams exhibiting how they earned a place in the final, a game worthy of a crowd!

With ten minutes left to run of the first half Cosford's Captain Robbie Bennett weaves himself through the defence with Baron left to beat. A cheeky side foot tap to the right bluffs the keeper and leaves him on the deck, Bennett's following heavy touch unfortunately runs the ball out of play just wide of an empty net. Baron stayed down clutching his knee and the future of the Digby goalie looked uncertain. He

resumed the game with a laboured goal kick, clearly showing the strain to his knee but his perseverance to stay on the pitch.



Baron earning his keep.

Digby continued to take the fight to Cosford with resolve. A determined Digby midfield was beginning to press the Cosford defence. Cosford feeling the pressure gifted Digby a free kick. Matthew Deans swung a strong ball into the box from 50 yards out to be comfortably cleared by the Cosford defence. The following corner was headed well over the cross bar by Dyson. Digby demanding a half time equaliser.

Another free kick is awarded to Digby 20 yards out, Richard Bingley steps up. He fires an absolute cannonball across the ground, around the wall finding the bottom corner of the net. The score was levelled, the underdogs grabbed a lifeline just before the half time whistle.



Bingley's free kick hitting home.

Cosford started the second half firing on all cylinders and within a minute Hadden-Becker was testing the reach of Baron yet again. The quality of the Cosford side was really beginning to show, retaining much of

the possession and creating loads of space. Perhaps too much at times as a 48th minute goal was disallowed due to offside.

Cosford continued to screw the nut on Digby's defence only to be denied on several occasions by a superb performance from the Digby keeper. It was only a matter of time before the onslaught paid off and a powerful left-footed shot from Preen smashed the top left of the net. Cosford's third came quickly after as Toner yet again worked the ball into space and fired a rocket to the bottom left, Baron had no time to react.



A brace for Preen seals the deal.

Victory was sealed 3 minutes later as Preen added a fourth with a close ball placed neatly past the keeper. 4-1 with 20 minutes to go, Digby would have to put a shift in now to turn the game around. To their absolute credit, they continued to battle on and didn't admit defeat easily, exchanges in the middle of the pitch remained clean and the sportsmanship was high throughout. Unfortunately, Cosford proved too much and Preen added to the score sheet once again. Hadden-Becker placed a perfectly lobbed pass over the defence to the feet of Preen just outside the box. A superb 15-yard strike clinched his hat-trick.



Preen smashing home his third.



MoM Richard Bingley

The professionalism and effort of both teams throughout was reflected in the game, superb, worthy of being the Plate final. With the SRT and MDS managers in attendance they were given the opportunity to pick the Man of the Match, Digby's No9 Cpl Richard Bingley the rightful recipient after putting in a big shift and keeping the Digby team fighting till the end.

The RAF FA Plate was awarded after the match by Peter Williamson from SecureCloud+, A major sponsor of Royal Air Force Football and the sponsor of the RAF Plate competition.

Final score 5-1.

Squads

RAF Cosford		RAF Digby	
1	Sgt Stu Algar	1	SAC Luke Baron
2	SAC Brodie Gray	2	SAC Steven Brammer
6	Fg Off Sal Hill	3	Cpl Ashlee Williams
5	AC George Birkbeck	4	WO2 Matthew Deans
3	SAC Jordan Watts	5	SSgt Pete Worthington
4	Cpl Phil Grove	6	PO John Dawson
8	SAC Kyle Willis	7	Cpl Max Gaskin
7	Cpl Jack Hadden-Becker	8	Cpl Radley Dyson
9	AC Luke Preen	9	Cpl Richard Bingley
10	Sgt Luke Toner	10	SAC Greg Lawrie
11	Cpl Robbie Bennett (C)	11	SAC Michael Mugford
Substitutes			
Gk	AC Scott Wilding	12	Cpl Nicholas Griffin
17	Cpl John Martin	14	Sgt Andrew Edwards
19	AC Daniel Simpson	15	SAC Samuel Finlow
12	AC Sam Beales	17	LAC Jack Carlin
18	AC Armani Riley	18	SAC Lawrence Harper
14	AC Luke Williams		
15	SAC Ollie Harris		

Ref: Flt Lt Jack Deschoolmeester – RAF High Wycombe

Asst: Flt Lt George Salloway – RAF Brize Norton

Asst: Cpl Rob Slater – RAF Benson

4th Official: Cpl Chris Arnell

Match Report – Fg Off Paul Stansfield – Deputy Director of Comms

Photographs – SAC Samantha Holden – ACSSU

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