

Gwent's Whisky too strong for West Wales

WEST WALES F.A. 0 - 2 GWENT COUNTY F.A.

Goals in each half from Liam Whisky and Kyle Bassett, sent the West Wales representative side to defeat, in the FAW Regions' Cup Competition, at Stebonheath Park, Llanelli. (reports Robert Clement).

Despite creating an abundance of scoring opportunities throughout the game, failure to make an impact proved costly; where as the limited options from the Gwent opposition was more clinical.

With both teams having gained convincing victories against the South Wales F.A. the West Wales outfit were eager to end a series of disappointing results against their visitors.

West Wales started on fire and almost produced a significant beginning, attempting to gain the lead after only three minutes, with CRC Rangers frontrunner Jamie Hopkins connecting to fire a shot which rebounded off the upright. That was then quickly followed with Carl Mucha miss kicking from close range.

Gwent County continued to have their defensive qualities examined, with Jamie Hopkins sending a rising shot over the top, and soon after former hat-trick hero Ashley Bevan, lashed a low struck effort wide of the target from fifteen yards.

With West Wales having failed to make a positive impression, the Monmouthshire outfit responded by taking the lead from their first likely looking attacking option, when a throw into the goalmouth by Ashley Palmer allowed Whisky to gain instant control, to then drill a well timed shot beyond the reach of goalkeeper Brian Sparkes.

On the half hour, Jamie James appeared to time his run into the Gwent goalmouth to perfection, only for his left footed finish to flash wide of the target.

There was a moment of creativity about the Gwent attack force just before the interval with Graham Dutton losing possession, and it was Mark Millinship who was aware of the opportunity to progress forward, but it was Sparkes who responded with a positive clearance.

The West Wales shot stopper was once again brought into action during the 56th minute, and he was well positioned to gather a fiercely struck shot from Bassett, the former Cardiff City youth product.

There was an additional attempt for West Wales to move up a gear, with the action hastily switching to the other end, but it was the outstretched foot of goalkeeper David Pearce which denied Hopkins the leveler.

Gwent struck for a second goal after 63 minutes when Chris Bickerton delivered a left sided cross into the path of Bassett and the invitation to score was too good to miss.

Despite that second setback, West Wales continued to show power, pace and strength, but despite gaining a series of Lee Stone free kicks, regrettably there was no supporting colleague available to make the desirable impact.

With six minutes remaining, Bevan continued to look capable of finding the net, but was unable to apply direction with a header straight into the palms of Pearce, following a corner from substitute James Stanmore.

"I think we're all absolutely devastated having lost this game, but at the same time pleased that we've played so well, passing the ball around the pitch", said West Wales manager John Cornelius.

"We've hit the post, struck the bar, and their goalkeeper has pulled off four excellent saves, in comparison Brian Sparkes really hasn't had much to do."

"It was clinical finishing by Gwent; we had our chances and we didn't put them away, but over all this season the West Wales squad have been excellent.

"Gwent County are our bogey side, but we just have to get together now for next year, and have a few more friendly games before we play them once more."

Meanwhile Gwent County manager Adrian Howells said, "At the end of the day it's about scoring goals".

"We've struck twice and I think that we possibly had a little bit more quality up front, but overall West Wales will be disappointed that they've got nothing out of the game."

"We have a one step advantage now at the halfway stage, but there is still a long way to go yet, with another two matches to complete the South Wales region's campaign in twelve months time".

Team check:- West Wales: Brian Sparkes, Ewan Findlay (Kristian Lacy 81st min), Jordon Bija (Michael Yates 60th min), Lee Stone, Graham Dutton (capt), Jamie James, Ashley Bevan, James Norman, Alex McKinney, Jamie Hopkins, Carl Mucha (James Stanmore 24th min). Substitutes not used: Chris Lazell, Jonathan Clarke, Aaron Peglar, Robert Cunnah.

Gwent County: David Pearce, Ashley Palmer, Jermaine Poole, Lewis Clark (capt) (Leigh Bull 42nd min), Mark Taylor, Craig Norman (Dean Merrett 90th+2), Liam Whisky, Daniel McDonald, Kyle Bassett, Mark Millinship, Chris Bickerton (Richard Lund 78th min).

Substitutes not used: Luke Lewis, Sam Morris, Richard Jeremiah.

Referee:- Paul Fisher (Port Talbot).

Score summary:- Gwent County: Liam Whisky 13th min, Kyle Bassett 63rd min.