



Vs Bannockburn,
Bannockburn, 6th
September 2008, KO 2.30



The Battle of Bannockburn- Take Two

Team- Pete Hamilton, Hammy, heggie, shanta, McCall, johnny parr, tam, timo, sean, capp, scotty. Subs- paddy, john rox, johnny gordon

Bannockburn proved to be the perfect setting for the perfect occasion. Here, in the belly of a valley and in the shadow of Bannockburn Bridge, Strathclyde (Div 1 Champions 07/08) took on Bannockburn (Premier League Champions 07/08) for the first time in the Clyde's Caledonian League history. With no form book to follow, the Premier League Champions started favourites. After a minutes silence to pay respects to one of Bannock burn's long serving committee members, the game kicked off in front of a scattering of folk. Of course, such an illustrious fixture as this one pulled in a few interested spectators. To name a couple, the Scottish Amateur Football selector, and international beer monster Ian Donaghey, who was just recently honoured my Carlsberg in Zurich at a recent beer convention for his services to inspiring young wannabes to take up the mantle. However, back to the game and it was Bannockburn who started the first half the better by having long periods of possession amongst the 3 big central defenders. Although the Clyde were under no threat by allowing the big men at the back the ball, the league's best strike force in Capp and McLennan, were dropping too deep and congesting the midfield. This made it difficult for both teams to enjoy any controlled possession in the middle of the park. As the first half progressed, both teams' best attacking options were coming from the flanks. Clyde had most success down the right with Hill but were not only lacking composure with the final ball, but also the presence of numbers in the box due to how deep the forwards were dropping when not in possession. After these missed opportunities from wide, Bannockburn displayed their cutting edge by playing one touch football from back to front. A long ball from the back was played up to one of the strong and pacey frontmen who drifted out to Clyde's right side, pulling Clyde's defence with him. Here, a give and go over the top with the left wingback exposed the Clyde defence with Bannockburn's most dangerous player in the first half dinking the ball over the advancing Pete Hamilton. The goal brought the home side's touchline to life, with orders being passed on to kill the game off. The home side responded to the demands and looked the more dangerous of the two sides for the remainder of the first half. However, an injury to one of Bannockburn's front men lead to a telling change 10 minutes before the interval. Bannockburn continued to threaten an out if sorts Clyde team, but were wasteful in attack and blazed shots over the bar from long distances more than once instead of finding a killer pass.

Clyde answered the questions posed at half time by a frustrated Will Senior and an angry Ja by starting the second half in typical Strathclyde fashion. With the two frontment playing a higher line and not giving the backline of Bannockburn's any time on the ball, it allowed the midfield pairing of Tam and Timo (or collectively known as Tamo) to get their foot on the ball and bring the hobbits on both wings into play. The game became stretched and the in form wide men started to terrorise the awkward looking Bannockburn backline. With the back four being marshalled well by Heggie and looking very solid, McCall ventured further forward linking well with McBride down the left flank. Clyde were getting a lot of joy from switching the play and delivering telling balls into the box, which was now occupied by the two hard working frontmen, but were unlucky not to equalise. Sensing blood and with time running out, Will Senior needed to gamble if Clyde were to get anything from the game that they deserved. Tam was the one to make way for the hungry and fit again Johnny Gordon with Timo providing the screening role in front of the back four. This had an immediate impact with Gordon scoring from a headed corner with his first touch. Clyde pushed forward knowing that Bannockburn would be happy to settle for a draw and continued to press and hassle the Bannockburn players. The closing down and hard work paid off as it was Scotty who capitalised by intercepting a cross field ball by one of Bannockburn's central defenders, a ball they got away with in the first half. Scotty remained calm and composed and slotted the ball to the keepers left. Knowing the Premier league champions might respond to going behind at home, Clyde were keen to still take the game to them and it wasn't before long that Clyde put together another fast and flowing break from right to left which ended up with Scotty forcing another good save from the keeper after a McBride cutback. From the resulting corner, Shanta rose well at the back to head the ball forcefully against the back of the defender's head, resulting in the ball taking an age to drop at Capp's feet. The big striker showed great composure in firing the ball into the roof of the net to surely seal the win for Clyde with 10 minutes remaining. However, any pre-empted thoughts of a win were soon vanished when Shanta was unlucky to bring down one of their players inside the box with 5 minutes to go. I say unlucky as the striker was through on goal with a one on one with the keeper and the big man having previously put in a number of 'Bobby Moore' tackles prior to just mistiming this one. No cause for worry however as the taker dragged his penalty wide leaving Clyde to savour a fantastic victory away from home against the defending champs.

Performances that caught the eye- Johnny Gordon's work rate off the ball and his composure on the ball, Shanta's tackling, Johnny Parr and Sean's link up play, Capp and Scotty's work rate, Will Senior reading of the game.

MOM- Scotty McLennan