



Vs Hurlford Thistle
Saturday 7th March
Stepps
KO 2.00 pm



It was unfamiliar territory for 'Clyde on Saturday as they took on Ayrshire outfit Hurlford Thistle in the last 16 of the Scottish Cup, the furthest the club has progressed in this competition.

Will had a full squad to choose from for the most important fixture so far this season, and even welcomed back his son, Will Junior, into the squad as a ready-made replacement for Capp should he have failed his early-morning fitness test. Unlucky for us, however, the big man's thigh stood up to the test and the Goal Machine was confined to the bench for this one. He was joined there by the General, Duffer and Jonny G, leaving the starting XI looking like this:

Hamilton; Patrick, Shanta, Heggie, McCall; Parr, Donaghey, Fotheringham, McBride; McLennan, Hornell

Any nerves the boys might have had pre-match were helped by being able to have a right good laugh during the warm-up at the sight of an ageing doctor leading the line for the 2nd team on the park opposite. You have never seen movement like it....

The match started at a frantic pace, with Hurlford settling into their rhythm quicker than the 'Clyde, with, as Will and John had warned in the dressing room, them looking to get their tricky right winger onto the ball at every available opportunity. However, although they perhaps started the brighter of the two teams, Hurlford didn't manage to create any clear-cut opportunities in the opening 15 minutes. At this point Ja Ja and Teeeeeemo started to assert their authority in the midfield, and, with Hurlford's left winger sticking closely to Boom Boom, Paddy started to get on the ball more and create some openings for Jonny to deliver some good balls into the box. However, the Hurlford defence coped manfully with these deliveries, and no chances worthy of note came our way.

Indeed, it was from one of Paddy's runs that never seem to go anywhere that Hurlford took a rather fortunate lead against the run of play. After bursting past a couple of players Paddy chose to lay it off to Ja, just as the big man lost his footing on the wet surface. The loose ball broke to their right midfielder who, after spotting the Cheetah off his line, launched one from inside his own half. Sadly for the 'Clyde, Pete's nickname refers more to his lack of moral fibre when it comes to the ladies rather than his ability to run like f*ck, and so the wind-assisted effort flew over his head and into the net before he could get back on his line.

After the opening goal it was good to see that rather than implode like in previous big games, the team rallied and actually upped their game, and the remainder of the half was played out in the opponent's half. 'Clyde were getting a lot of joy down both flanks, with JP in particular getting past his man regularly, so much so that the wee fella ended up with an ankle the size of his chin and one of the Hurlford boy's studs in his calf after a crude attempt to stop him in his tracks.

With 10 minutes to go to half time 'Clyde had a period of sustained pressure which culminated in a thoroughly deserved equaliser. A series of corners and crosses into the box led to a stamash in the Hurlford penalty area, and when the ball broke to the edge of the area Timo was on hand to strike the ball though a ruck of players into the bottom corner of the net.

HT: 1-1

Strathclyde were in confident mood during the half time interval having played their way back into the game, and with the wind at their back in the second half looked to be favourites to win the tie. However, the team's fluid passing never really got going in the 2nd half as the midfield four of Hurlford worked extremely hard to hound and harry us into mistakes. Our case was not helped after Timo had to go off midway through the 2nd half after a seemingly innocuous challenge with their portly number 10 resulted in the big man's shoulder popping out it's socket. The dislocation could put him on the sidelines for up to two months, which is a major blow for both him and the team.

To be honest the 2nd half of the game was so scrappy that I can't really remember any chances coming to either side, apart from maybe one where their winger got in behind McCall and should have done better with his shot.



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Pete also got down well to a long range effort from one of their strikers, and did well to hold it on the slippery surface. At the other end, although we probably enjoyed a greater share of the possession, we didn't ever really manage to get in behind their back four and get crosses in the box to cause them any trouble. With ten minutes to go Hurlford seemed content to settle for the replay at their home turf, and the game fizzled out.

In fact, probably the most entertaining part of the 2nd half was listening to some of the guff coming from their side of the park. Big Pete and Shanta were both called cabbages, which is one of the laziest shouts this reporter has ever heard, Ja was labelled a big lanky freak, which you can kinda see where they were coming from, and, most unjustly in Kid Rock's opinion, Paddy was given the title of the ugliest see you next Tuesday that they had ever come across. This after spending the 1st half looking at McCall running up and down their wing!!

FT: 1-1

Probably a fair result in the end, with both teams being well matched. The return leg is down in deepest darkest Ayrshire next week, which promises to be a good'un. Although the home crowd promises to be less than welcoming, 'Clyde should have no fear about going down there and securing a place in the quarter finals.

MOM: Not just a sympathy vote, before he was injured Timo's goal and overall performance were superb. But it's basically the sympathy vote thing.