



On a drizzly day Clyde set out to progress to the next round of the Challenge Cup against a Whitehurst team who lay several places below them in the league table. Clyde had a point to prove having drawn 0-0 disappointingly previously in the league fixture in a game they felt they should have won comfortably. The squad was a strong one and Vinny saw this as an ideal opportunity to implement the 4-3-3 formation that he had worked on in training previously. This led to a number of changes in the line up with Dave the Rave in the sticks behind an unfamiliar back 4 of Phil Murray who switched to right back and a new centre half pairing of Egg chasing Shanta and Maze Moray with Stevie Beggs getting his first start at left back. The midfield trio contained regulars Tam McLaughlan and Ross (I love goals, or do I?) Wilson, being joined in the middle by Ross Hamilton, who dropped in from his usual role up front. Up front was Doctor Cross who provided the mobility with his lightning pace and youthful exuberance being accompanied up front by Calum Murison and Stevie (I love frogs) Stirling. This was not a day for slack performances as a formidable bench containing Calum Mciver, Niall McLure, John Roxburgh and Andy Esson was waiting to get on. The warm up was longer than usual and went without any hitches except when Tinny discovered a little "froggy" friend and its best not to go into details about how that one ended. The warm up set the Clyde lads up well for the kick off and gave them the edge over a Whitehurst team who arrived on the park only moments before kick-off. Clyde sported a mostly white strip but it was ginger that emerged as the colour of the day despite the cheap digs made by Crossy in the changing rooms previously!

The game started with Clyde as expected due to their superior warm up, on the ascendancy. It looked like a goal was only coming from one team but as can happen so easily in football. The possession and territorial dominance enjoyed by Clyde counted for nothing when Whitehurst stole a freak lead on the counter attack. Fortunately this seemed to spur Clyde on and they pressed for the equaliser getting joy down both wings with Beggsy and Tinny linking up well to create some openings and Murison's pace on the opposite flank causing the antique left back no end of problems. Doctor Cross had the ball in the net at one point after a neat interchange between Wilson and Stirling led to an incisive pass putting him in a goal scoring position. Only the referee spotted the offside through his special goggles which were to prove amusing throughout the match. Inevitably the goal had to come and it came from the auld yin who was leading the line. After some quick feet and a deft flick through the defence by Tam McLaughlan the old timer was onto it in a flash and rounded the keeper to kind of duff the ball into the net past a lunging defender. With the scores level, Clyde pushed on for the goal that would take them into the lead and the Whitehurst defence struggled to cope with the barrage of attacks but yet again Whitehurst scored a goal out of the blue which left the Clyde centre backs and the goalkeeper unsure as to just who's responsibility it was to deal with a high, seemingly harmless, ball lobbed into the penalty area. After another setback against the run of play Clyde kicked on again and showed that they were not in any way disheartened and believed they would get the goal to level the scores again. After a foul on Murison at the edge of the Whitehurst penalty area close to half time their chance game. My word did they take it! Beggs played the role of decoy in a way that could have won him an Oscar with the right contacts and caused the keeper to set up a very "anti-left footer" wall. When he stepped over the dead ball it was too late for the keeper to react to the exquisite right foot strike by McLaughlan into the top left corner. The gingers had struck with devastating effect! The game was then uneventful until the half time whistle.

Vinny saw no reason to change things immediately as although the scores were tied, Clyde's domination was almost complete. This decision to leave things as they were paid off as only a couple of minutes into the second half the ball was flicked in behind the right full back by the inspirationally ginger McLaughlan and Tinny cut open the Whitehurst defence like he would a can of Heinz Baked Beans and arrived right on time to knock the ball past the helpless keeper with a side-helping of suspicious handball thrown in for good measure. Fortunately he was too far away from the frog to fulfil an earlier promise but the Clyde were ecstatic anyway and were determined to hold on to their lead which they had gained for the first time in the match. Five minutes later Calum McIver came on for Stevie Stirling and Niall McLure replaced Calum Murison. Both the lads could be satisfied with their contribution to the game. Five minutes later the lightning quick Crossy left the field of play to make way for John Roxburgh. After this the Clyde pushed for the goal that would make the lead comfortable and they may have done so if it wasn't for runs deemed "mistimed" by the referee with special goggles with Callum McIver, John Roxburgh, Niall McLure and Ross Hamilton blown for offside, all of whom ironically would all have found



University of
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Vs Whitehurst
Saturday 7th March
Stepps
KO 1.30 pm



themselves with an excellent scoring opportunity had the dubious decision not been made. Most notable was Niall McLure who ran from 10 yards inside his own half after the ball was played only to be deemed offside. Something to work on Niall! The timing of the run simply wasn't good enough. Your guess is as good as mine as to why! Clyde tried a couple of methods in a search for a goal to seal the tie including a searching ball from left back which someone who wasn't as slow as Niall McLure may have caught but he remained just a little off although the ball did bounce about 30 yards in front of him so I guess he made a reasonable effort. Another piece of intricate passing led to Niall McLure playing the ball into John Roxburgh who laid a perfect ball across the penalty area to an unmarked Callum McIver at the far post. He drew his weaker right foot back for the simplest of tasks of slotting the ball into an empty net but as he did some creature from flying in from nowhere! It was spiny like Sonic the Hedgehog and seemed determined to rob his teammate of a goal! Mission Accomplished!! Although he denied his teammate the simplest of goals, he didn't see fit to put the ball in the net himself instead flicking it wide leaving Clyde an awkward 10 minutes remaining with a narrow 3-2 lead. As the culprit arose, he was identified as Ross Wilson, midfield maestro and self proclaimed lover of goals!! As the last five minutes approached, Tam McLaughlan clashed heads with an opponent and incurred a minor scratch. Somehow Tam found it a suitable idea to bleed profusely and the other player seemed to agree. This caused them both to leave the field of play and with Clyde having used all their subs, 10 men were left to defend the lead they had earned less comfortably than they should have. Whitehurst began their push for an equaliser as desperation set in and for the first time they started to push the Clyde into defensive mode. Clyde broke away from a rare Whitehurst attack and Sonic the hedgehog drove past the last despairing Whitehurst defender who realising he hadn't the pace to get back, saw no other option but to bring down the Sega icon. Fortunately for him, the referee spotted a covering defender who no one else had noticed and saw a yellow card as a suitable punishment. I really have to buy a pair of them special goggles as they seem to bring the good out of every situation even if there is none. Whitehurst's gung-ho attitude finally led to their downfall as they left themselves exposed defensively by pushing too many men forward and a poor kick from their goalkeeper led to Niall McLure bringing the ball down and driving past the defence before slotting the ball home to seal Strathclyde's place in the next round. This eased the pressure on the defence and they held out comfortably for the remainder of what little time there was.

After the game, Clyde had little reason to be disappointed with the performance as a whole after having almost complete dominance throughout the match. Only a couple of dodgy goals were the negative aspects of the performance. Everyone who was ginger in the team did well and both were monumental in the victory. This will no doubt be to the dismay of certain Doctors who have certain prejudices but the most worrying factor of the day is the failure to convert dominance into a comprehensive victory which may against a superior team come back to haunt them.

After the game certain discrepancies seemed to occur in the changing room by those that arrived previous to other players. This is unlikely to go unpunished so the guilty party (who may be known) may have difficult times ahead!