

# Ashton Keynes Blue v Robins U11 Red

## 24<sup>th</sup> January 2016 (Winter Trophy Event Game 5)



### Scorers:

Lewis 10

### Players of the Match:

Matt Chivers

Sam Wiles

Two good teams, both with decent players, both in good form, something has to give. Last time we met Ashton Keynes was in the final game of the Autumn Trophy Event back in November and we ran out comfortable winners. Maybe that gave some of our players a false sense that this game was going to be easier but today proved once again that you can't take any team lightly in this division.

The Ashton management certainly had their players fired up and they came charging out of the blocks, like a team with a point to prove. Both teams created a few half chances in the opening minutes but we couldn't quite get anything clear-cut, while at the other end Ashton Keynes were breaking strongly on the counter only to find Chivs once again in fine form today. With the game ebbing and flowing from end to end, Robins forced a corner in the 10th minute and Alan delivered a beauty which found Lewis in space in the box, Lewis reacted quickly and calmly to jab the ball home and give us the lead.

After this both teams sparred with each other trying to carve out chances, with both sets of forwards playing right on the edge to gain a breakthrough, testing both defences and linesmen alike! With the Robins defence not quite firing today, Chivs was seeing plenty of action and was more than up to the job, doing a superb impression of Herr Neuer in the sweeper keeper role and snuffing out several dangerous looking attacks with some superb decision making and positive clearances.

That's not to say he was without any help, while the Robins defence weren't up to their usual high standards, there was no lack of effort as Sonny, Zak and Teddy all worked hard to keep out the magpie-striped hordes. In front of them, Euan, Tom and Josh were doing a superb job, working tirelessly in midfield to break up Ashton Keynes attacks and provide a creative spark to kick start our own – Sparky more than living up to his name here with some great little flashes on the wing. Tom did a great job, faced with a 2v1 overload against 2 very strong midfielders, he more than held his own and Josh, battling against illness as well as Ashton Keynes, constantly kept going, pulling off some great skills to win the ball back and reset our attack. Lewis and Sam both looked dangerous on the counter, both working hard to create options up front, but battling against a very determined Ashton Keynes defence which seemed to shut them down every time it seemed they'd carved out a chance for themselves.

Around the 20 minute mark, Ashton had a really good chance to draw level only for the linesman and referee to spot the player was offside by about 3 or 4 yards, good job by both who had done well to keep up with play in a frenetically paced game. That should have served as a warning and just as it seemed we would retain our slender lead into the break, some neat build-up play and a clever one-two on the edge of the box enabled Ashton Keynes to score and bring the game level.

Once again Ashton seemed to start the second half the quicker of the two teams and it wasn't long before we failed to deal with a dangerous ball into the box which ricocheted off several boots and legs before an Ashton Keynes player reacted quickest to stab the ball home and put them ahead for the first time. Robins' heads seemed to drop a little and you could see some of the self-confidence ebb away. With 20 minutes of the half left, we changed formation to see if we could get ourselves back into the game but despite creating some good chances, a combination of solid defending and excellent goal-keeping kept us at bay.

Ashton had a few good breaks of their own but Chivs was once more in top form and held them at bay and the defence had perked up a little after the break, Zak making some really well timed, solid tackles and clearances, and Sonny and Teddy both playing much more the way we're used to seeing them. Alan worked really hard today tracking back, using his skills and pace to good effect, and both he and Teddy showing they had the pace to match the Ashton Keynes attackers and prevent any further damage to the Robins goal. We came close to grabbing an equaliser when a well worked corner routine between Alan and Sonny gave Alan the chance to have a speculative shot at goal which was too hot for the Ashton Keynes keeper who fumbled it in. But this time it was our turn to have a goal chalked off for offside, much to the relief of the Ashton Keynes players and management.

Last time we met, Ashton Keynes weren't fully at their best and we punished them for it. This time, it was our turn to have an off day, while Ashton Keynes were right at the top of their game and they were certainly the better team today and deserved the win. No excuses, but as we know many of the squad are being asked to manage several different personal challenges at the moment and so perhaps "off days" like this are inevitable – we really can't complain, we've not had many! The players will have learned from today and in the long run that learning will stand them in good stead. But for today, a well-deserved win for Ashton Keynes and best of luck to them for the rest of the season – it would be nice to think that next time we meet, both teams are playing at their full potential, that really will be a game worth watching!

