

## **Hockey Tournament**

The crowd was still roaring as the half time whistle blew in the final between Hayes and Ashford.

Both teams collapsed on their benches exhausted. Sweat running down their faces and evil looks were being shot down the field to the opposing team.

The spectators were enjoying an intense game of hockey on this bitterly cold July evening. A fierce wind blowing and the clouds covered the sky like a huge black cloak, threatening to release a harsh, unforgiving rain. The floodlights had lit up the Astroturf pitch at Imperial College.

We were losing to Ashford 2-1, but as the matchbooks show, we haven't lost a match to Ashford after 11 games with them, so I was confident that we could come back.

Towards the end of the half, we had Ashford on the run. They were getting sloppy with their midfield, so we took advantage and gave the defence a battering. With the defence tired, we were able to score our first goal of the match 1 minute before half time.

Our coach decided that there was going to be a change of players. Our centre forward was injured, so he was replaced with Kam, a midfielder from the 3<sup>rd</sup> team. Bill, our goalkeeper wasn't feeling well, so he came off and replaced by Barry and our left half was too tired to carry on, so I was put in his place.

We waited a couple of minutes for Barry to get padded up in the keepers' kit and we headed back towards the pitch. The crowd greeted us with cheers as we walked onto the pitch. The 2 teams were ready to start as the umpire signalled the start of the game.

As we had thought, Ashford was playing the ball tightly, as a defensive strategy. But they couldn't hold us off for long. We were waiting for a loose ball to pick up. The opportunity came as a player tripped and fell flat on his face because his laces were undone.

The ball was pelted into the scoring area, where Kam was waiting. He stopped the ball on the edge of the D. Two defenders were thundering towards him but he ignored them. He kept his eye on the ball, lined it up with the goal and swung his stick at the ball.

The stick hit the ball with a loud crack. The ball lifted into the air. The crowd went silent and all eyes were focused on the ball. The keeper was left standing as the ball flew past his head and into the back of the net.

Kam jumped up and ran around celebrating while everyone was cheering and yelling. The crowd were on their feet, their jaws dropped with astonishment.

With 5 minutes left of the game, we had to score, because if it went to penalty flicks, we would lose because our best penalty takers had been substituted off.

A foul by Ashford shortly after centre ball had been taken was going to be our last chance to score before the final whistle.

The free hit had been taken by Harry, but it wasn't aimed properly. It went towards the left of the goal. I ran for the ball and flicked it just as it reached the line. It landed in front of the goal and Kam gave it a soft touch to help it into the goal.

And there it was, the final whistle. We walked back into the changing rooms where everyone was yelling and running around.

We came out of the changing rooms to a reception from our supporters congratulating us. We were given a trophy and medals for our brilliant performance throughout the tournament.