



# Fulham Website

## Match Report

Fulham Under-21s put in a battling display, but their Bristol Street Motors Trophy run came to an end after a 3-2 defeat at Wycombe Wanderers.

An Ollie O'Neill worldie and Jonathan Esenga second half strike made it a tight affair right up until the full-time whistle.

Harvey Araujo and Steven Benda returned at the back, with 16-year-old Josh King getting his first taste at a more senior level in midfield.

Aaron Loupalo-Bi, who scored the all-important goal at Gillingham, started on the bench for this one with Kristian Šekularac given the nod up front.

The hosts were enjoying the better of things early on and created the first opportunity six minutes in. A teasing ball from the right reached Dale Taylor but he was unable to get a clean connection on his effort.

David Wheeler was released down the right for Wycombe a few minutes later, but thankfully his deflected cross evaded both sets of players before rolling out for a throw.

Benda needed to be on his toes as we approached the 20-minute-mark, getting down to smother Kieran Sadlier's low, bobbling effort.

We found ourselves behind soon after, thanks to a Dale Taylor strike. After our lads did well to block a series of shots in the build-up to the goal, Taylor connected perfectly with a volley to beat Benda at his near post.

The young Whites reacted well after conceding, with a couple of decent O'Neill corners needing defending.

We created our best chance on 31 minutes, with Harris coming close for us. After bringing down a chipped pass beautifully, the Welshman could only aim his shot just over whilst under pressure from a defender.

Benda made up for an error a few minutes later, sticking out a strong glove to deny Garath McCleary's stinging strike from range after initially giving the ball away.

Things became tougher for us eight minutes before the break, with The Chairboys grabbing a second goal to extend their advantage. Dale Taylor did well to bring the ball down in a tight area, re-adjust his feet and poke past Benda.

We gave ourselves some hope right at the end of the first half, and what a strike it was from O'Neill to get us a goal back. The Irishman curled a simply stunning effort past Franco Ravizzoli and into the far corner.

As a result, we went in just one goal down at the break after an entertaining opening half.

We didn't wait about to begin creating after the interval, with Imani Lanquedoc almost reaching O'Neill's teasing cross towards the back post.

After taking a few hits, Wycombe threw back a punch of their own. Sadlier's deflected strike from close range rolled just wide of the near post.

Šekularac came close for us after being laid off perfectly by Lanquedoc following a quick break-away. His effort forced Ravizzoli into a save, but it was a comfortable one.

The Swiss forward tried his luck again just a few minutes later from range, but his decent strike whizzed just over the crossbar.

We were very fortunate not to concede a third on 57 minutes. Dale Taylor, in search of his hat-trick, charged through on goal but could only poke his effort just wide of the near post.

Jonathan Esenga almost got himself a goal directly from a corner, with the Wycombe 'keeper back-pedaling to tip his swinging delivery behind.

Harris came mightily close to scoring on 72 minutes, and by his standards he'd have been slightly disappointed. After sitting a defender down with a cut-in, his shot was hit straight into the grateful gloves of Ravizzoli.

Lanqueudoc then tried an ambitious effort as our boys began to turn the screw. His curling effort flew narrowly wide.

Just as the young Whites looked like they could grab an equaliser, the hosts added their third. A looping free-kick eventually fell to substitute Chris Forino, who produced a powerful effort which flew in.

Again though, we refused to let heads drop and grabbed another back just minutes later to make it 3-2. Esenga's delivery from the right took a slight deflection before looping up and over Ravizzoli.

Substitute Loupalo-Bi thought he'd grabbed us the all-important third, but his brilliant header was pushed wide by Ravizzoli who was at full stretch.

Our lads fought until the bitter end, but Wycombe held out to record the win and secure progression.