



Hitchin Hearts Belles FC 2010-2011 Under 10's Tournament Report



Date: Saturday 15th October 2010
Kick-off: 2:00 PM
Venue: St Albans
Competition: League match V St Albans City North

The Belles travelled to St Albans for this afternoon kick off and during the journey from Ickleford we had pretty much endured all four seasons (weather wise).

The school pitch was badly in need of a mow and there were more lines on it than the London Underground.

Before kick off it was important to address the small matter of the 6-1 defeat to today's opponents and as a group we acknowledged that that wasn't going to happen today and we would work for each other harder than ever and make amends.

On occasion you wonder whether the girls take in what you say but we couldn't have been happier with their reaction. From the first whistle the Belles pressed and harried and forced the unbeaten yellows back onto their goal line and backed them up with nowhere to go. We had never seen such enthusiasm and desire from these young Belles!

In a desperate attempt to clear their lines, St Albans, under pressure from makeshift striker Chloe 'on a mission' Everton, cleared the ball into the path of Katie who fired home to put the Belles one up after just a couple of frenetic minutes.

The Belles kept up the high tempo and substitutions were made wisely to ensure reinforcements would continue to set the pace of the game and not allow St Albans to get a hold of the game. Rosie on for the industrious Erin, weaved her way through the St Albans defence and the long grass to test the keeper on a couple of occasions and the sight of the Belles smallest player exuding such muscle, only served to spur the Belles on even further.

When St Albans did manage to win the odd skirmish their moves were quickly dissected by the welcome return to the team of Cleo together with her side kick Gemma.

As the Belles looked to see out the first half on top, a wayward Belles goal kick went straight to St Albans who returned it with intent and were lucky to be going into the break all square.



Battle lines being drawn out



Katie on the attack



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Erin controlling the middle of the park



Nemo well marshalled by the opposition

St Albans having not experienced such a tough game this season, came out brightly after the break and reminded us why they unbeaten by hitting us with some dangerous counter-attacking play.

In previous weeks the Belles may have froze under such pressure but not today, any corner, run or shot by their opponents was blocked, halted and dealt with, usually resulting in a counter attack of our own. This was turning into a great game and the noise from both sets of supporters was at a season high. Both sets of coaches pushed their players for more and the girls were willing to find it.

A long ball clearance from St Albans fell to their impressive striker who found herself ahead of Gemma but with Erin to beat. Weighing up her chances of beating Erin and deciding against it, she shot powerfully and the ball took a slight deflection to go underneath Chloe who had the original angle covered and the home team went 2-1 up.

Realising that his team were facing a more determined Belles compared to 3 weeks ago, the St Albans coach preceded to put every yellow shirt behind the ball and hold on to their slender margin. Was this the Champions League final?

With St Albans offering no attacking threat, the Belles won everything in midfield and created assault after assault on the crowded St Albans goal. Katie stung their keepers hands with a ferocious shot from the right, Tashai powered into the box and narrowly missed and Zhane bombarded their box with corner after corner as the yellows defended desperately.

Eventually the seconds ticked away and St Albans had re-enacted the 'great escape' and were extremely complimentary on our girl's performance.

Having been so impressed with our post match hospitality on recent trips to Ickleford, St Albans put on a lovely spread of refreshments for the girls which were well received.

Whilst St Albans took the 3 points and made it 4 wins from 4 games, the real winner today was Girl's football.

Well done the Belles for giving everything and coming soooooo close!

Team: Chloe E, Erin, Cleo, Rosie, Katie, Courtney, Nemo, Gemma, Zhane, Tashai

Final score: 1 v 2

Player of the Match: Erin (a real midfield general, showed great composure and example)

Match Report by: Simon O'Leary