

31st October 2020: AFC Waverton U13 Bees vs Barnton

The only scary thing about today's Halloween game was the weather, but a fierce wind and squalls of driving rain didn't faze the Bees as they took on a Barnton team that they had lost heavily to a month ago.

With the wind at their backs at kick off and parents watching a League game for the first time this season, Waverton began with confidence and immediately put Barnton on the back foot. Ruby and Lottie took charge of midfield and were instrumental in driving the girls forward, with Ella and Sarina joining in from the left and right wings respectively, and all four of them got the ball into dangerous positions. Striker Georgia and Ruby fired in a couple of warning shots early on, but when Georgia was put through on goal by Sarina, following more good work from Ruby, she made no mistake, giving Waverton a deserved lead. Waverton kept their foot on the gas, and when Millie, who started the game as an emergency left back, also moved into midfield along with Emma, the Bees' threat only increased. One glorious passage of play was begun by Ella when she got her head up and slipped the ball inside to Ruby; Ruby's first touch moved it further across to Georgia in the D of the Barnton box, and Georgia's first touch was a cushioned lay-off to an on-rushing Millie who smashed a first time effort just wide of the left-hand post from outside the box. Ruby was also unlucky from a similar position.

At the other end, Amelia, Daisy and Elsa just about had the measure of Barnton's sporadic attacks, Daisy and Elsa just about keeping on top of their dangerous wingers, with Sarina, Emma and Ella tracking back well to help out. On the one occasion Barnton's left winger did slalom through a couple of challenges inside the box, goalkeeper Amelie's positioning was good enough to limit her shooting options, forcing her to shoot against the post, with the ball ricocheting back off Amelie and out for a corner. This was the start of a brief period of Barnton pressure, and after Waverton dallied over making a clearance from the edge of the box, a Barnton midfielder fizzed a low shot into Amelie's corner.

Waverton took heed and pressed forward once more, with Elsa and Daisy making good progress with their long throw-ins down either flank, and it was from one of these that Waverton's second goal came. Daisy was alert when she got the ball in her hands on the halfway line, and her quick long throw sent Georgia away beyond Barnton's defenders, and she shot early, curling a beautiful finish of the bouncing ball around Barnton's advancing goalkeeper and inside her left-hand post for her second of the game. A 2-1 lead at halftime was no more than they deserved.

The second half saw more of the same. Barnton threatened slightly more with wind behind them and a change in formation, but Waverton were more than equal to any threats posed. Elsa, now facing the more dangerous of Barnton's wingers was excellent, strong in the tackle and more than willing to lean into her opponent as she became more frustrated and physical as a result of Elsa's obduracy. She brought the ball forwards too, stepping into midfield to find passes, and launching one excellent first time ball over a Barnton defender's head for Emma to run onto. Lottie was equally destructive, using her energy to great effect to continually win the ball back, she too in no mood to yield to Barnton's increasing aggression. With the game becoming a scrap as Barnton desperately pushed for a second equaliser, Waverton's front three found some space in behind. Emma on the left, when released from her frequent defensive duties, made a couple of dangerous runs down the left, forcing corners, and Ruby, now using her pace and strength to harass defenders as centre-forward also got away once, Barnton's goalkeeper making an excellent save from point blank range to prevent her bagging a third for the Bees. The excellent first touches of Millie and Ella brought some composure to Waverton's game, both of them providing the silk to Lottie's steel, Lottie having won the battle for midfield. For good measure, she even showed some guile in her game, dropping a shoulder and gliding past a Barnton player just outside the box before laying the ball off for Georgia to run onto, and Millie just getting crowded out at the last moment from her pass. Alongside Elsa at the back, Amelia was winning the ball, bringing it forwards into midfield and completing pass, Daisy was conscientious in covering across and clearing the ball when necessary, and Barnton simply didn't look like scoring. So it was unfortunate when Amelie mistook an overhit through-ball for a back pass: with the ball at her feet and no passing options, she

was closed down quickly by Barnton's winger, and despite recovering to make a good save, she couldn't prevent the follow up from going in to give Barnton a fortunate second equaliser.

As had been impressed on the Bees before the game, the girls were able to use the same pride and determination displayed in their two preceding fixtures against tougher opposition to their advantage, and were very unfortunate not to claim all three points. Their first League point of the season gets them off the bottom of the table though, and should give them well-earned confidence for their next fixture.

Player of the Match was Sarina, as selected by Ella.