

NPR Premis traveled the long away trip to Taradale for Saturdays Chatham Cup 2nd Round game with 6 wins and 1 draw under their belt. We started out on Friday after work and stayed in the picturesque Palmerston North!!!! The boys had a quiet night which was what was asked as we were going to be facing our toughest test so far as Taradale play 2 Divisions above us. The club didn't enter Chatham Cup last year so the boys were keen not to spend all this time and effort to go over and make the numbers up. Training had been pretty average during the week and at 1 stage we looked like we were going to be going over with the bare 11 with family and work commitments. We were still in a confident mood and after a brief discussion we decided to change our formation to have a more attacking edge.

The game started off with Taradale coming out for the first 20 and having a real go at us they were by far the best footballing team we have faced this year. We weathered the first 20 and the guys got used to the new formation and started getting the ball on the deck, the movement and passing was great to watch. Scotty Smith started getting into the game and slotted one nicely but unfortunately was called offside and from where I was standing it looked a bit 1 eyed. Our first goal came from a nice corner drilled over by Mark Wood which was met with a great jump from James Graham who smashed it, unfortunately it was going straight back from where it came from, luckily for us smacked back of Matt Sigurdsson's knee and into the roof of the net, a great start to a pretty even game. Taradale still pressed and to their credit started finding their danger men more and more out wide. Our wide men Joe Bailey and Scotty Evans and back 3 of Matt Sigurdsson, Matt Thomson and Liam Munro were outstanding. The same can be said of Mark Wood, Matt Goodey and Michael Somers and up front James Graham, Scotty Smith and Jeff Yates who was claiming everything caused Taradale all sorts of problems.

1-0 at half time and the good thing was the boys thought they could get even better in the 2nd half. Taradale kept pressing after the break but just couldn't get past our determined defending. Our second goal came when Scotty Smith picked the ball up inside his own half turned the defender brilliantly and ran at them, as he got about 20 out, James Graham made a great run just off his shoulder and Scotty lay the ball off for James to smash it into the top corner 2-0. Also Hats off to the subs of Gareth Turner, Ryan Munro and Mickey Stevens who were all outstanding and work for the team when they came on. With time up on my watch the boys fell asleep from a throw in and Taradale moved it quickly down the flank and crossed to an unmarked player at the far post to finish nicely 2-1. I had a brief moment where maybe I thought we might have an Australian v NZ time keeping error and just wandered where the ref was getting this extra time from as there hadn't been any incidents during the game. But the boys saw it out and about a minute later blew for full time. The boys came off feeling ecstatic with the result and they should be proud of themselves they thoroughly deserved their result.

It was hard from a coach's point of view giving M.O.M after the team's display. Not 1 single person let their team mates down. James Graham looked a different player from the beginning of the season and worked all game for his team and scored a spanker! Matt Sigurdsson at the back was composed and played some nice football. Scotty Smith up front gave Taradale headaches all day. But for me the M.O.M was Liam Munro this week he was everywhere at the back stopping attacks and worked hard defensively.

The boys have a tough game away this week against Peringa in the League. Well done again to my lads we wait anxiously for the next draw for the 3rd Round.

Also thanks for the entertainment boys on the way back on a long 5 hour drive, No doubt a few sore heads the next day!!!!