



England Fire Service 0-1 Royal Navy

Squad;

- C Hasler (London)**
- J Oatley (London)**
- A McLurg (GMC)**
- K Brookes (Lincolnshire)**
- R Whelan (GMC)**
- B Wood (London)**
- R Tonks (South Yorkshire)**
- L Thompson (Merseyside)**
- A Hildred (Lincolnshire)**
- C Baker (West Mids)**
- A McManus (West Yorkshire)**
- M Arber (London)**
- D Gilbert (Lincolnshire)**
- G Phillips (GMC)**
- S Pickles (Humberside)**
- England Section;**
- Dave Gilbert (Lincolnshire)**
- Jake Bristow (Essex)**
- Gary Phillips (GMC)**
- Shaun Pickles (Humberside)**
- Forthcoming Fixtures;**
- Wales (Cardiff) 4/2/16**
- Scotland (Manchester) 14/4/16**

England sunk by Navy in Portsmouth

HMS Temeraire in Portsmouth was the venue for the revived fixture against the Royal Navy on 4th December. After two good performances, the squad were looking to progress further, but were hampered by a number of withdrawals from the squad. Matt Arber was drafted in from London and the bench of Manager Rob Tonks, Secretary Dave Gilbert, Treasurer Gary Phillips and Team Assistant Shaun Pickles was more like an episode of Dad's Army than the real depth of squad the manager required.

The pitch was soft and heavy going and a strong wind made conditions difficult as the game kicked off. The Navy were busy in the opening few minutes as England struggled to settle. Against the wind, and with only Lee Thompson up front, it was always going to be a difficult half. In fact it was ten minutes into the game before England created a decent passing move. Ben Wood played a lovely ball out to Chris Baker who played a good one-two with Thompson before the ball was intercepted by a navy defender. The resulting break caught England asleep and a lovely ball split the defence wide open. The Navy striker ran through and slid the ball past the outcoming Hasler to give the Navy the lead. After 17 minutes, England had their first real chance. The lively Arber won a free kick which was whipped into the box.

Alex McLurg met the ball with his head, the keeper parried and Andy McManus was inches away from poking the ball home. Throughout the half, England failed to find their rhythm as the Navy team played ball after ball over the top. In truth, neither team looked particularly dangerous and the majority of the play was in the centre of the pitch. The navy had another good chance though when their player was put through. His attempted lob beat Hasler, but went wide of the goal. Ash Hildred was then fouled on the edge of the box which

signalled the end to a frustrating half for the England team. This really was to be a game of two halves. England came out invigorated and Arber, who had done well in the first half, continued to make life difficult for the navy defence with his pace and direct running. His run and cross found Thompson whose header was parried by the keeper. Hildred swivelled and hit a first time shot which somehow hit the crossbar and went over. Arber and McManus then had chances, the latter with a powerful run through the centre before the ball was cleared just as he



The England squad v Royal Navy, in the 'borrowed' Navy kit, due to a clash of colours

was about to shoot. Yet another chance for Thompson saw him put through to the left of the goal. His shot with the outside of his foot couldn't find the target though and went wide. Thompsons powerful run set up Hildred next, but his first time shot was saved.

presented another good chance for England. Thompsons free kick hit the wall and was cleared though. Rick Whelan then found McManus in the box with a good cross. The ball cannoned off head and shoulder though and the keeper easily saved his effort. Hildred and Joe Oatley then linked up well. Oatley feeding Wood who played in Thompson again. This time the striker took a shot from a narrow angle and the keeper always had it covered. England improved as the half went on but couldn't find the breakthrough. Another Thompson free kick was deflected into the arms of the keeper and then the referee

England were well on top by now, but just couldn't get the breakthrough. The Navy appeared to be out of ideas and looking to hold on even with half an hour to go. The introduction of Manager Tonks continued the pressure but despite looking by far the better team, England just couldn't find the net. Hasler only had one save to make in the second half and a combination of missed chances and the sloppy goal given away in the first half saw the final score of Royal Navy 1 England Fire 0. A disappointing result and undeserved in the end. Matt Arber rightly took the man of the match accolade on his debut.



Kelvyn Brookes and Andy McManus both receiving their 3 game badges from Manager Rob Tonks, with Assistant Lee Thompson looking on.