

Crowborough Ath 1 Cray Valley (PM) 2
Southern Counties East Football League – Premier Div
13/1/18

Crowborough Match Report

A poor first 45 minutes cost the Crows dear in this game and puts a severe dent in their promotion hopes as they lost the one game advantage they had over second placed Beckenham Town, who they play at home next Saturday, and remain three points behind having played twenty games each. This is because their match away at Rochester United was postponed due to an unfit pitch one assumes.

Leaders Sevenoaks Town also extended their points advantage over the Crows following their 2-2 draw at home to Canterbury City, although it could have been worse as the home side were 2-0 up at one point, however, they have two games in hand on the Crows and are five points clear of them. The Millers started far brighter than the home side, their intensity, passing, awareness of where their team mates were and their movement gave the Crows problems throughout the first 45 minutes and they could have been 2-0 up in the first 10 minutes as they had one effort blocked on the line and Burbridge had to make an excellent save, tipping a shot over the bar from the edge of the area. Cray Valley PM took a deserved lead in the 15th minute, a through ball wasn't cut out and it found the feet of Flack inside the area whereupon he took the ball around Burbridge before slotting the ball in to the net despite the desperate attempt of a Crow defender to clear the ball away to safety. What chances the Crows had were normally from distance as the fluency and accurate passing they're known for was not in evidence, the ball was given away far too often with an inaccurate pass, the movement seemed somewhat laboured and too many times the midfield was bypassed in an effort to take the fastest route to goal.

The Crows went further behind in the 29th minute, Turner bringing down a Cray Valley forward as he was near the goaline about to cross the ball and referee Konkoly had no option but to award the penalty kick. Lisbie took the kick and gave Burbridge no chance from 12 yards, hitting the ball with pace and accuracy in to the net. Turner received a yellow card for his tackle and he joined a Millers player, Tummyaka, who saw a yellow card earlier for tackle and then Nelson of Cray Valley joined them in the 31st minute, again for a tackle.

The rest of the half was pretty uneventful as the Crows were struggling to get their play going and the visitors settled to get to the interval with a 2-0 lead, which they achieved when the referee blew his whistle after 46 minutes.

For the second half the home side had to change things and Tear, a defender, was withdrawn which meant a forward could come on, Pearson taking his place. The home side now had greater possession of the ball and started to exert some pressure on the away side, it wasn't always fluid or pretty but at least it was better than the first half.

The Crows cause was not helped when Perry went down with a thigh injury in the 49th minute and had to leave the field of play, although in his replacement, Carrington, you know you have a player that will compete for everything and give 100%, making it very hard for defenders.

Whilst the home side dominated the half for long periods, the Cray defenders kept their goal well protected for most of it, although two good shots from Pearson and Pring did give them cause for concern, one bringing out a good save from Walker, the other going just inches wide of the post and crossbar.

Carrington then made his first impression on the Cray defence when making a tackle by the corner flag, receiving a yellow card for his troubles in the 73rd minute, however, only 3 minutes later he was brought down in the box and referee Konkoly once again pointed to the spot, this time for the Crows. With everyone wondering who would take the spot kick, Carrington grabbed the ball and made sure as he had earned it he was now going to take it, slamming it past Walker and in to the net for 2-1 to the Millers.

As usual when under pressure and time is running out, the opposition made a couple of substitutions to take time out of the game and slow the rhythm of the Crows, which is natural and is considered to be the "professional" thing to do, I hope we would do it anyway.

However, in the remaining time, there was 6 minutes of added-on time in all, the only thing of note was a yellow card for dissent, shown to Walder, thus the match ended 2-1 to Cray Valley PM and I doubt many people would disagree they deserved it.

The Crows will definitely have to play better next Saturday otherwise it'll start looking very bleak in the promotion stakes.