

Cray Wanderers fifth game of pre-season ended in defeat at near neighbours Cray Valley PM on a very hot day at the DGS Marine Stadium.

The Wands who had been in impressive form at Grays Athletic on Wednesday night never really came close to matching that as Cray Valley deservedly won a rather lacklustre game although there was a bit of luck about their winning goal.

Cray Wanderers who were without Jay Leader, Bradley Pritchard, Freddie Parker and Mitchell Nelson started the game quite well and on the front foot and Aaron Rhule cut inside from the left and fired just over the bar from the edge of the area.

Then a decent passing move saw Karl Dent set up Michael Power who from inside the area chipped the ball wide of the right post.

Cray Valley who finished sixth last season and had won two of their three pre-season games threatened when lively Anthony Edgar cut in from the right and flashed a shot narrowly past the left post

The Wands were awarded a free kick in a decent position 25 yards from goal but Power saw his effort sail well over the bar.

The heat was starting to win the game and just before a much needed water break Cray Valley came closest yet when after a free kick was blocked the ball came out to Ryan Flack who drove a shot just wide.

The goal came not long after the resumption in the 31st minute when Edgar down the right swung over a cross which Nick Blue had to push onto the crossbar with Denzel Gayle reacting quickest to turn the ball in from close range. Blue appeared to have been clattered trying to save but after treatment was back on his feet. Before half time, Blue excelled with a superb save when he denied Edgar who hit a fizzing drive which was pushed behind and the half ended with Cray Valley on top.

Half Time: 1-0

Considering the heat the first half was played at a pretty steady pace but the second half was more sedate with very few chances at either end as two good defences were on top.

Cray looked to threaten from a free kick out on the left with Matt Carter's cross coming to Marcus Evans but his effort was blocked just inside the area.

Then after a neat passing build up Jerome Federico who played the ball to Michael Power who laid the ball to Carter whose low shot forced ex-Wand Andy Walker to get down to save.

After that the Cray Wanderers Ice Bath was the highlight of the half as the therapeutic and refreshing looking cold water saw up to five players cooling down in the pool.

Cray Valley looked as good as any side Cray have played so far and could well have added a second goal when experienced former Charlton Athletic and Leyton Orient forward Kevin Lisbie down the left set up Danny Smith whose shot from eight yards was parried by Blue.

Then the roles were reversed when Smith down the left set up Lisbie and his shot was patted down by Blue who was by far the busier keeper during the afternoon.

The last real chance of the game came to Cray Valley when Gayle's right wing cross shot was saved by Blue's feet and the return cross was headed off target by Joe N'Guessan.

In the end the game petered out with Cray not at their fluent best and somewhat below par but it was a hot day afternoon and creativity was difficult despite a lot of endeavour but certainly by the beginning of the league season today would have been swiftly forgotten. Apart from the ice bath!

Cray Wanderers: Nick Blue, Ben Mundele (Matthew George), Marcus Evans (Alex Brefo), Dean Hamlin, Barney Williams, Tom Phipp (Sean Roberts), Xavier Vidal (Zak Henry), Karl Dent (Matt Carter), Jerome Federico (Junior Dadson), Aaron Rhule, Michael Power

Cray Valley PM – Andy Walker, Harry Cullum, Danny Smith, Josh James, Ashley Sains, Liam Hickey (Jack White), Denzel Gayle, Jake Rose (Joe N'Guessan), Joe Nwoko (Kevin Lisbie), Anthony Edgar (Callum Willock), Ryan Flack (Francis Babalda)

Referee: Wally James

Assistants: Toby Enstone, Ian Newman

Att: 70