

Chilton Cantello 2 International College 4

The first scheduled match against Chilton Cantello had been postponed because of a waterlogged pitch, but Tuesday was a beautiful late autumn day.

For the first twenty minutes, both teams played in a tentative manner gently probing their opponents' defence but wary of leaving their own goal exposed. Yes fought hard to control our central defence and repeatedly headed clear. Marko played a captain's role, with darting runs forward but always ready to scurry back to assist the defence. Chilton Cantello players were much stronger in clearing the ball, forcing our defence to cover a lot of ground. Etienne, seemingly jet-propelled, constantly appeared all over the pitch. Ben, Johannes, Ken and Ahmed were extremely dogged in the defence of our goal. Johannes at one stage managed to force his way through four successive, heavy tackles. Our attack stepped up the pace, with some accurate short passing between Theo, Andrei, Shaun and Nikita. Unfortunately, it regularly broke down in front of Chilton's goal. Similarly, we were unable to connect with some excellent corner kicks by Marko. Eventually, Andrei managed to slot home a goal after twenty minutes. This spurred on our forwards during the next few minutes, but to no avail.

Half-time: 1-0.

Whatever was said by the Chilton Cantello coach at half-time, it very definitely produced results. They began the second half in a very forceful and organised manner, whilst we were extremely slow and casual-especially in front of our own goal. Within the space of six minutes, Chilton had drawn level and then roared into the lead. It was only brave goalkeeping by Mikhail that restricted them to two goals. A series of substitutions in defence brought on Fred and Michael for a period of time, but we appeared to be very vulnerable and tiring faster than Chilton.

However, the boys drew on their reserves and mounted a series of attacks using the full width of the pitch. Within the space of three minutes, Andrei had scored an equaliser and Marko came tantalizingly close with powerful long range shot. Chilton were then unlucky to concede a penalty that Marko duly drilled into the back of the net. For the next five minutes, it was only exceptional saves by the Chilton goalkeeper that stopped shots by both Nikita and Theo. Shaun found himself shadowed by two or three players as he sped up and down the left wing. Judicious substitution by Chilton produced some strong attacks on our goal which were only repelled by a massed defence. In the closing minutes, Nikita's persistence was rewarded with a goal resulting from probably the most powerful shot of the day.

A well-deserved but hard fought 4-2 victory.