

25<sup>th</sup> September. Away versus Chilton Cantelo

**Chilton Cantelo:** 0

**International College:** 4

Valetin 5

Rukavishnikov 27, 32

Dubois 38

A brace from Levon, a goal by Denis, and a sublime free-kick from captain Etienne saw Sherborne record a resounding 4 – 0 victory against Chilton Cantelo. The season's opening fixture, the first competitive match that the Sherborne boys had played together, got off to a cagey start with the respective midfields battling for possession and control. However, the deadlock was broken when the visitors registered a crucial early goal. Breaking from defence, a long ball found powerful striker Levon on the right side of the penalty area; the Chilton keeper could only parry the Uzbek's stinging effort and the ball fell into the path of Denis who was able to scramble the ball home from four yards. Sherborne might have doubled their lead moments later, but winger Pavel saw his shot fly past the wrong side of the post.

In the following minutes Denis and Ruslan both went close before Sherborne were forced to deal with the first spell of concerted Chilton pressure in the match. Nevertheless, the defence, marshalled by centre-backs Ken and Jonny, held firm with committed tackling and a high line that continued to trap the Chilton forwards off-side throughout the game. Vladimir, in goal, was a model of composure; commanding his area with authority and demonstrating safe and sharp hands when called upon.

Sherborne were able to protect their lead until half time with a terrier-like Ruslan instrumental in preventing the opposition midfield any time to settle on the ball. The International College may well have gone into the break two up had Levon not spurned a glorious opportunity; shooting over from close range.

The second half saw Sherborne deploy their attacking flair and defensive commitment and the away side were deservedly two nil ahead within two minutes of the restart when Levon latched onto a hopeful punt forward from Denis and showed creditable awareness to guide the ball past the onrushing keeper. Vladimir continued his impressive display with the gloves, on two occasions showing speed off his line to foil the Chilton attack, before Levon notched his second. Having ghosted in behind the opposition defence, the big striker shot tamely but saw his effort bobble through the goalie's hands and into the net.

Sherborne's dominant performance was capped by a delightful dead-ball strike from Etienne. From a free-kick at least 25 yards from goal, the captain was able to find the top left hand corner, leaving the unfortunate Chilton keeper helplessly rooted to his line. With Cantonaesque gallic *arrogance* Dubois looked skywards and raised his arms aloft before being mobbed by his team mates. The 4 – 0 scoreline was preserved until full-time through the sterling defensive efforts of Jonny, a crunching saving tackle on the edge of the box, and Ken, clearing off the line to protect Vladimir's thoroughly deserved clean sheet.

The scoreline reflects an impressive team display by Sherborne with the entire squad showing a great deal of desire and ability that bodes positively for the season. Fred was a controlling influence in his midfield holding role, whilst full-backs Gary and Nam Joo were tenacious and positionally aware.

Substitutes Anton, Cheng Yeng and Daniyar were full of running when they got their opportunity. Ruslan, on the right side of midfield, put in a man-of-the-match performance, his play typical of Sherborne's enthusiastic and competitive winning start.

AGW