



Royals off the mark in close encounter

After a difficult baptism in the unexpectedly competitive Hong Kong Legal League, at the fifth time of asking the KCC Royals finally found what it takes to grab three points, edging the intriguingly named Hamsup (literally: "salty wet" in Cantonese, but with connotations of lecherousness) in a feisty encounter on a wet and windy (albeit not salty) Monday evening at King's Park.

The day had started badly for Manager Dave "Fabio" Christmas, with only 9 players confirmed for kick-off by early afternoon. But by the evening reinforcements had arrived, with two super-subs, Fred Cheung and Louis Ng providing back-up for the starting eleven – although after 10 minutes it was looking as though Fred and Louis would be needed sooner rather than later, as two headers sent the Royals into an early 2-0 deficit.

First, emulating the Swedish player who scored with a header in his own half, Andy "Lordy" Laxton skillfully nodded the ball from 25 yards out past his own 'keeper, the onrushing James Gough. Goughie's attempts to stop the ball crossing the line only served to finish the job, and he was retrieving the ball from the net again moments later when slack marking at a corner allowed a diminutive Hamsup Lo (lit: "dirty old man") to slip his head in and put the opposition two in front.



It was about time our forwards Sam "Flash" Trayford (pictured) and Luca Merlone got into the action, and this they did, with a vengeance. First, Luca slammed an angled left-foot drive home following a silky

long pass from Lordy. Not to be outdone, "Flash" then showed he could smack a ball with his left, catching the 'keeper off balance with a pumping drive from 25 yards. With the salty and wet ones looking distinctly ragged, "Flash" then rammed home a header from a perfectly placed corner and the Royals finished a soggy half 3-2 to the good.

Fabio's team talk was all about continuing to "do what you're doing", after which we promptly went out and conceded a sloppy second-half goal to a low shot from the Hamsup forward. But normal service was resumed when "Flash" lashed home a loose ball from a corner to complete a hat-trick, and guest player Dave Notchristmas calmly took a gilt-edged chance provided by Luca to put some daylight between the Royals and the salties.



Flash then went down under a clumsy Hamsup challenge, and it was time to sound the bugle and call for the cavalry, aka Fred 'n' Louis. Their appearance added an injection of urgency all over the park, which was heightened by a well-taken goal from the massive Hamsup striker narrowing the margin to one goal. But with Jon McKinley and Geoff Ho taking their time with restarts, Lordy delivering several lusty blows upfield and Mally Leigh refusing to allow Hamsup anywhere near the ball, we were able to mount a rearguard action, run down the clock and chalk up a first league win for the Royals against a very decent opponent.

Fabio afterwards credited the win to his continued use of the highly unpopular 5-3-2 formation, which he had cunningly implemented under the guise of a 4-4-2 with himself in midfield yet playing behind the two centre-backs. With such guile in the backroom, the striking talents of "Flash" and Luca, and Fred 'n' Louis covering our backs it will be a major shock if the Royals are not in the top half of the league come the sharp end of the season.

'Jonny Mac'



Junior Football Season well underway

The calm of the summer break seems a long way behind us now and the KCC junior footballers are busy kicking, running, passing and even scoring a few goals every Saturday. The junior football programme now has 190 players on Saturday mornings and 40+ older players training every Saturday evening at King's Park. All of this makes for an extremely popular and successful programme for KCC junior footballers.

Most of the age groups have already started playing in HKJFL league matches and tournaments. The 2002 A team played wonderfully in their first tournament of the season, winning the Plate which meant that they were promoted to the Cup at the next tournament. It's always great to win silverware for the KCC trophy cabinet! The 2003 team played in their first ever tournament and chalked up their first win – let's hope that there are many more to come!

The 2000 team are playing league matches for the first time, and their first matches were against two of the stronger teams in the league. They still played well, and it is only a matter of time before they get points on the board. The 1999 team will play in a new format this season, involving 11-a-

side league matches. This is a big step up and again they have had tough opponents in the first couple of matches. Hang on in there guys – the wins will come along soon.

The 1998 team have also played two of the best teams from last season in their first 2 matches (just who is in charge of these fixtures?!). They have done extremely well, drawing both matches 1-1 so we are hoping that they will be able to mount a strong challenge for the league title this season!

The Under 15s and the newest team in the section, the Under 16s have begun training up at King's Park on Saturday evenings, and will shortly be in action in friendly matches against Happy Valley and Sha Tin.

The exciting news from the girls' section is that the first EVER KCC girls' tournament was hosted on 24 September. Around 200 girls from all over Hong Kong took part and KCC had competitive teams across four different age groups. Whilst not winning any of the Cup competitions, the KCC girls showed just how far they have come in a very short space of time and played in several finals – like the KCC boys, they just need to practice a few more penalty kicks!



It has been great to see so many returning and new players over the first few weeks of the season. The tournaments hosted at KCC have been a great success, particularly the girls' tournament, and I would like to thank the KCC staff and the BSS and parent coaches for their help. We are always looking for more parents to help as every Saturday we have 200+ KCC players taking part in training and matches, sometimes at 5 or 6 different venues around Hong Kong. Please therefore contact me if you can help out.

Cheers, and see you on Saturday morning!

Tony Smith

