Warlingham School V U.E. RIPOLLES U-13

After a very early meet time at Warlingham School (6am!!) the 20 Year 8 boys had travelled to Villarreal to play their opening fixture against Spanish opposition U.E. Ripolles. The 3G surface was primed and ready and the boys, despite being a little jaded, came out to warm up and get some last minute instructions from Mr Ashdown. With 20 boys on the tour, there were to be two sides playing in each half to give all the students the cultural experience of playing Spanish opposition.

The game started in a ‘rapido’ fashion with both sides trying to get a stronghold on proceedings. The first chance went the way of the hosts forcing a fantastic save from Henry Still down to his right. The game was end to end stuff with both clubs having chances to score with Ripolles settling down a lot quicker and getting into their passing game but Warlingham looking dangerous with a more direct, counter attacking approach. Kane Kum had the next chance with a low shot which was unfortunately straight at the keeper, a little more composure and he would have put Warlingham in front. In a sucker punch fashion, the very next chance created the opening goal. Ripolles played the ball well through the midfield to a central midfield player who scooped the ball over the top of the Warlingham defence allowing the very pacey forward to run onto a bouncing ball and lob it over the despairing Still. It was a class finish and one that Still could do nothing about.

Warlingham were trying to get back into the game with Lewis Kelly battling very well to win the ball back but also using his quick feet and sharp change of pace to make things happen down the left for the visitors. From Lewis’ endeavour, Warlingham were awarded a free kick on the left hand side which was curled in beautifully by Harvey Trayfoot and met by the head of Louis Walsh. The connection was solid but he gained too much elevation on the ball and it powered over the bar. Kane was then put through by Josh Sills with an excellent weighed pass. Kane did everything right taking his time before curling the ball high over the onrushing keeper who was expecting a low drive but unfortunately it had too much elevation and it skimmed the bar.

One on one’s were becoming increasingly easy to create for Warlingham, but the final pass or first touch was not quite there, quite likely due to the long day and travel exploits the boys had endured. Two more chances were created in the first half for Warlingham, again one on one chances, but both Jaheim Kubeyinje and Kane’s first touch was too heavy when taking them around the keeper and the ball trickled agonisingly out for a goal kick.

The half time talk was to continue playing the same way despite a new set of players coming on as we were creating chances. It was the hosts pacey forward who carved out the first chance after being put through by their central midfielder. He sprinted away from Harvey only to see his driven, left footed strike fly past the post. Sam Price and Alex Corvaglia were combining well down the right hand side and causing quite a few problems for Ripolles. The combination was baring fruit and it culminated in a free kick which Harvey curled just over the bar with the keeper stranded. Ryan Deards was providing a few amusing scenes during this dominant spell for Warlingham. At one point he moved much like Neo from The Matrix to avoid the ball hitting him and also went on a marauding run following the ball despite being one of our back three! The calm nature of Rippolles was starting to create problems for the Warlingham back three of Harvey, Ellis Walker and Ryan with the pace of their forward always a threat. It was his pace again that led to a top class save from Henry high to his left to tip the ball around the post. Sam and Alex again demonstrated good interplay down te right allowing Sam to cut back into the centre to deliver a left footed cross to Oliver Squire to struck home low and hard into the bottom left hand corner to put Warlingham back on level terms. It was met with jubilant cheers from the players on and off the pitch and a noticeable fist pump from Mr Robins! Despite previous warnings however, the lesson had not been learnt as the very next attack led to the hosts going ahead for the second time through their pacey forward. This time it was a touch of class from the Spanish forward. Again being put through deep in our own half, he sprinted away from Ellis, composed himself and then with such grace and a touch of arrogance, scooped the ball over the stranded Still. It was a great finish and quite worthy of the Cantona celebration he performed after his chip against Sunderland.

Despite going down 2-1, Warlingham continued with their high tempo game plan and carved out the very next chance. Great work from Squire down the left allowed him to cut the ball back to Aram Rounagh who deliver for Corvaglia to head goalwards. It unfortunately lacked the power to trouble the keeper who gobbled up the chance. With fatigued bodies, it was no surprise to see the pacey forward again finding pockets of space, this time it was down the left. He struck a driven cross to the near post which was met by his strike partner. Still did well to parry the ball away only for the Ripolles right winger to slot home from the rebound to make it 3-1.

The game was tighter than the score line suggested but the bys thoroughly enjoyed the experience and knew if one more of our chances had been converted earlier on in the game, we may have held stronger to get a more positive result. Their pacey forward was definitely the difference but the boys battled well with many of the players never playing together before and some filling into positions they had little experience in.

It was a great start to the tour experience, despite the result, and set the tone for the rest of the trip.

Warlingham School V Ysgol Plasmawr

In the next game the side who started the second half of the first game commenced against a Welsh side who were also on an inspiresport tour. Blake Plows was the commanding Vidic like centre back at the heart of the defence and rebuffed the initial threat of the opposition. The Welsh side were a good outfit and tried to play good football, including having two very nimble forwards who were to cause us quite a few issues in the first half.

Ryan Deards continued where he left off demonstrating tekkers that aren’t even out yet but couldn’t prevent the Welsh side going ahead. There was a mix up at the back leading to a pass over the top for their forward to (again!) lob over the stranded Still. It was a good finish and frustratingly for Still, another time where his positioning was correct, but the finish was too good. It didn’t take long for them Ysgol Plasmawr to go two up. This time a break down the left led to a fizzed, low delivery to the near post which was turned into his own net by Ryan Deards in a Djimi Traore fashion as he couldn’t get his feet organised and bumbled it over his own line.

Fortunately Sam Price was able to get Warlingham back in the game with a sumptuous free kick into the top corner. It was a gorgeous free kick from the left hand side straight into the right hand top corner, Beckham would have been proud! It should have been the start of the fightback, but unfortunately another mix up at the back allowed their forward a free run on goal and he coolly slotted home to make the first half score 3-1.

The second half meant a full change of personal for Warlingham and Ysgol Plasmawr and it was one of our new players who had the first chance with a Charlie Adam type attempt from just inside his own half that went wide. Warlingham were now dominating the possession in the early stages and were carving out more chances. The pressure finally took its toll and Kum had a great first touch when put through to provide him enough time to compose himself and toe pock a finish past the keeper to put Warlingham back in it at 3-2. Josh Sills made up for his awful foul throw with a driving run down the right and delivered a whipped cross which was well headed clear by a Ysgol Plasmawr defender. It was met on the edge of the box by Trayfoot who volleyed with good technique, unfortunately straight at the relieved keeper.

The next chance was created by Louis Walsh who had opened out to spread the play wide to Lewis Kelly who had been taking his defender on down the left, decided to cut inside this time and struck a vicious shot across the keeper but wide. The pressure was really telling now but the well marshalled defence of Ysgol Plasmawr were frustrating the increasing pressure from Warlingham. However, with less than 5 minutes to go, Kubeyinje laid the ball into an onrushing Trayfoot and powered past his marker from just inside their half. The run was like Yaya Toure bulldozing through and he had the composure to flick it past the keeper, 3-3.

It was a fitting result for both teams with Ysgol Plasmawr dominance in the first half really showing as they raced into a comfortable lead, although Price’s goal was definitely something to savour in the first period. The second half was Warlingham’s with good possession and clinical finishing when well placed to ensure the spoils were shared.

Mr Ashdown