

LAST GASP CITY LEAVES FANS BREATHLESS

Contributed by Paul Weston
 Thursday, 18 February 2010
 Last Updated Thursday, 18 February 2010

BRISTOL CITY 1 CITY 1 It was raining heavily as I left East Anglia for Bristol. Unusually for the south-west the rain stopped as I headed along the M4 towards Ashton Gate. The ground itself is well hidden and rather home spun. Its main entrance is marked by a KFC. Inside the ground the burger and Bovril were even more overpriced than at the Walkers! The pitch looked in pretty good condition and the City fans were in good voice as usual and full of optimism after the performance against Scunthorpe. City started with the same side that shone in the first half against Scunthorpe and rose above the loss of Fryatt for probably the rest of the season. We began in confident mood, calmly passing in groups and breaking forward swiftly. Waghorn had an early chance saved. Gallagher, Waghorn and Dyer were proving very elusive. City looked like the home side and Bristol City could hardly get in the game. On a rare break Berner was caught out and booked for a tackle from behind. A win looked on the cards but we needed to take our chances. From a right wing cross Gallagher missed a sitter when he should have scored. The Bristol crowd grew quieter and quieter as the City fans grew more vociferous. The teams went in 0-0 at half time and we all knew that we really should have been 2-0 up at least....

The second half started and, as we feared, Bristol City moved up a gear. It was hard to see what had changed but they were winning more challenges in midfield and continually breaking down the right where Berner had his hands full. Nevertheless City still looked dangerous on the break. Waghorn volleyed wide and Oakley hit the post in a great move. At the other end, the furthest from the City fans, it was last ditch defending at times with Hobbs and Berner supreme in the centre and Weale making some good saves.

As the game entered its last 10 minutes it was good to see that both teams were going for the win. Pearson brought on Kermogant and Adams. Surprisingly Nigel did not substitute Dyer, as he usually does, even though he was beginning to look tired, make mistakes and had shot wide twice when in good positions.

Kermogant immediately stiffened midfield, winning aerial challenges and Adams looked lively, but too easily brushed off the ball. 0-0 looked on the cards for a well-earned point. Then the script changed…

Just as the board went up to announce that, surprisingly, there would be 5 minutes of injury time, Bristol City scored with a shot across Weale. It was hard to see what happened after City for once failed to clear out of defence. City fans couldn't believe it. We deserved more. Some fans around me headed for the exit…

Virtually right from the kick off, with about 3 minutes of injury time to go, Morrison sent in a deep cross from the right. Dyer controlled the ball brilliantly and turned and shot with his left into the corner of the net in front of the City fans. Cue jubilation. Dyer took off his shirt, got booked and collapsed into the City fans. Bristol City fans were stunned. A 1-1 draw snatched at the death and well deserved too.

Looking back on the match it was hard to name a man of the match. We just played well as a team and created chances throughout. Yes, we should have taken more of them but, considering this was the same Bristol City team that outplayed us at the Walkers, it was a fine result.

And so we move onto the ploughed field at Plymouth Argyle for another tough match against the Green Army and a team coming into a bit of form. Based on the evidence of the last two matches City has moved up a gear and in fact, as a team, playing better than when Fryatt was in the side.

We are still in the play off places and deservedly so. Blue Army!……

City: Weale; Morrison, Hobbs, Brown, Berner, Oakley, A King, Wellens, Dyer, Gallagher, Waghorn
 Subs: Logan, McGivern, Solano, Howard, Adams (72 for Oakley), N'Guessan (86 for Gallagher), Kermogant (72 for Waghorn).

Booked: Berner, Dyer.

Bristol City: Gerken; Orr, Fontaine, Carey, Nyatanga, Elliott, Johnson, Skuse, Haynes, Clarkson, Iwelumo. Subs: Maynard, Hartley, Collis, Williams, Sproule, Wilson, Agyemang.

Referee: S Hooper. Attendance: 13,746.