

Hamworthy Recreation Reserves faced Dorchester Sports in the Dorset Premier League Cup Final for the 2024/25 season. The young Hamworthy side looked to secure a victory over Dorchester Sports, who have defeated them twice this season in league matches.

In the sun soaked Wimborne Town FC stadium, Dorchester Sports got the game underway, both sides looking to make an impact from the kick off, the midfield battle was even so both sides looked to beat the midfield press by playing into the forwards to beat the other teams press, the first effort came 6 mins in, Max Wilcock showing his intent early on with a shot from distance which was comfortably saved by Dorch Sports GK Nick Hutchings. On 10 mins Ham Rec looked to apply some pressure to the Dorch Sports back line, Max and Elliot pressed and forced Nick Hutchings into a rushed clearance into midfield, this time Ash Boyt and Archie Whitfield combined to pressure the Sports midfield and won back possession, Ash spotted unmarked 16 year old Elliot Birtwistle unmarked in the middle of the Sports defence, Ash chipped the ball forward, Elliot ran forward, spotted Nick rushing off his line and with a first time chip lifted the ball over the stranded GK to open the scoring, **0-1**. The game now opened up, a lot of the game being played in midfield with neither goal keeper being tested until 24th min, Sports had the ball in the Rec half, Todd Combes clipped the ball in behind the Rec defence to Alex Godfrey who lifted his shot over Henry Birtwistle only for it to hit the goal post, Sports regained possession, floated a ball in from the right hand side to the back post, the ball was met by Joel Hewitt whose header went narrowly over. The momentum now switched to Sports as they piled on the pressure to get the equaliser. On 32 mins Ham Rec won a throw in half way into the Sports half, Liam Crutchley found Max on the edge of the penalty area, Max cut inside and shot from distance, the ball struck a Sports defender but the ball fell to Archie Whitfield unmarked, Archie cut into the box and placed his shot into the far corner only for Nick to tip his shot round the post. From the resulting corner Sports won the ball back, played Joel in on the left wing only for him to be offside, from the freekick Sports Captain Alex Godfrey court Rec Captain Gavin Haynes taking too long on the ball, Alex played in Dylan Ellis who drove at the Rec defence, on the edge of the 18 yard box his shot with the outside of his right foot saw his shot go just over the crossbar. With the game looking to fizzle out to half time Sports had another good chance to bring the game level, Shaun Bessant played a long pass forward, the ball bounce between the Rec CBs who neither took responsibility for and Alex Godfrey managed to get in between only for the ball to land in Henry Birtwistle's hands, let off for Rec. Not done there, Sports continued to apply pressure, Alex Godfrey again had a chance only for Liam Crutchley to block it on the 6-yard line, then Dylan Ellis had a chance but again the young defender blocked the effort and the ball was cleared.

HT 0-1

Ham Rec got the second half underway, immediately on the front foot, from a throw in on the right wing, Max Wilcock found Liam Crutchley unmarked on the edge of the Sports penalty area who's shot to the far bottom corner was tipped round the post by Nick Hutchings. 51 mins Sports had the ball in their midfield, Dylan Ellis picked out Alex Godfrey with a great pass that split the Rec CBs, Alex was in 1v1 with Henry Birtwistle, his cross goal shot was saved by Henry and cleared by Gavin Haynes, this was Gavins last involvement in the game, after feeling a slight hamstring injury the experience defender was replaced by another experienced defender, club record appearance holder Rikki Walden who also took the arm band. On the hour Sports showed their experience by controlling the pace of the game, they used this to their advantage to apply pressure to Rec, they looked to get in behind down both wings but the young Rec full backs held their own and forced them back. On 70 mins Rec weathered the storm and looked

like they were about to extend their lead, with Sports now camped in the Rec half looking for an equaliser, Ash Boyt picked up the ball in midfield, he played in Brad Hill on the right, Brad played a great first time ball into the path of Max who timed his run perfectly between the Sports CBs and went in 1v1 with the GK, Max sat Nick down, rounded him only to place his shot wide of the far post. This gave Rec momentum again, Rec won a corner on 72 mins, Liam Crutchley took the corner which fell to Will Lippiatt unmarked on the penalty spot who guided his header down to the far post, (taking a slight nick off a defender on its way in) 0-2. With two players on yellow cards Charlie Richards used this opportunity to replace Ash Boyt and Elliot Birtwistle with Matt Kerse and Sonny Pike expecting Sports to mount a fight back. Sports really stepped up the pressure, more aggressive in their press and started to push Rec back into their own half, Sports made changes and a change of shape bringing on another striker. In a rare attack Ham Rec broken down their left, Max Wilcock played in Matt Kerse who placed a shot towards the top far corner, beating Nick Hutchings only for his shot to strike the post and bounce back out. In the 81st min Sports won a free kick just inside their half, Nick Hutchings played the ball forward, first contact made by Kriss Radivojsa who flicked it towards the Rec goal, the ball bounced around before landing in front of Dylan Ellis who made no mistake from 6 yards, 1-2, the comeback was on!! Credit to both teams they both went toe to toe with each other for different reasons, the game became a basketball match and in that heat after 80 minutes the game was not finished. 88 mins Rec broke into the Sports half, Archie Whitfield picked the ball up in the 10 position, rolled it out to Brad Hill on the right wing, Brad played a first time cross into the box, Shaun Bessant attempted to clear the ball only for it to spin up in the air, Max was alert to the miss kick and pounced, challenged Nick Hutchings for the ball in the air, won the battle and made it 1-3.

FT 1-3

