

Report by Mark Burley, Director of Sport
A fantastic 24 hours for Soccer XI

On Friday 4th November Soccer XI took on St Joseph's College, Ipswich in Round 3 of the ISFA U18 Boodles Cup. Just 24 hours later the team faced Marlborough College in their regular inter-school fixture and they came through both matches with superb victories. We have reached the last 16 of the ISFA U18 Cup for the first time since the 2011-12 season and the team is on a nine match unbeaten run playing some wonderful attacking football.

Friday 4th November

1st XI v St Joseph's College, Ipswich (h)

Winchester's 1st XI took to Doggers on Friday for their highly anticipated Round of 32 ISFA match. Our opponents were St Joseph's Ipswich, who, having won their last two cup games comfortably, were expected to be a tough side to progress against. It looked like the match was heading this way when we went 1-0 down inside the opening minutes after a defensive error. A certain resilience and mental strength have anchored the team through tough times this season, and nothing was going to change that now. Within minutes, we responded with a bullet header from Van Every, who had just begun to get on top of a game which would earn him Yaya Touré comparisons from plaudits post-match. A back post finish from Foster and another penalty from Van Every put us up 3-1 at the break.

Most teams at this point would drop off, relax, comfortable with a two-goal cushion. But an eerie atmosphere of calm and promise flooded through the team at half time, who are beginning to look more and more like Barcelona 2010 than ever before. These assumptions were confirmed when Fennell, who was attempting his best Thiago impression, licked a side winder half volley in off the post from just inside the box shortly after the break. Yet another contender for goal of the season, which is quickly becoming a highlight reel that will be shown for decades to come. It is not often that every single player on the pitch drops a masterclass, but big teams like Winchester love to do it in the cup. A deft chip from Foster from outside the box less than a minute later secured the result. The intensity of this star-studded squad became too much for the opposition, who succumbed to a third Van Every goal, yet another bullet header, to seal his hat-trick. Caspar Hall, who had been unlucky to not get in on the act thus far, scorched in a seventh goal from range. We were unfortunate to concede an own goal from a free kick late on in the half. But even now, tired bodies and empty legs, we continued to dominate the game. The tempo, flair and passion that is Wykehamist football was summed up by the final goal of the game, Brant nutmegging the keeper with a backheel. An 8-2 win, this was a perfect result at the start of a busy schedule. Into the national last 16, we can now dream of how far we can go in the cup. This is a squad that is getting better and better, whilst keeping the same energy, determination, and love of football to win games. Thank you to everyone who came to watch today, it is much appreciated. We are EIGHT (8) games unbeaten, and face Marlborough at home on Saturday next. Up the Winch. (Will Whitehead, A)

Saturday 5th November:

1st XI v Marlborough College (h)

Having exhausted ourselves playing Brazil 1970 football the day previously, we knew that regardless of the quality of the opposition, it was going to be a tough game in difficult conditions on Doggers. In classic fashion, we slipped 1-0 down yet again, after a dubious call on a ball going out, before some tricky footwork by the Marlborough winger resulted in a tidy finish into the corner. But the comeback kings always step it up, and having been frustrated for most of yesterday, Caspar Hall buried a finish into the right-hand corner after a mazy run into the box. The remainder of the second half was scrappy, but on the stroke of half time, captain Van Every leathered in a free kick to put us 2-1 up at the break.

It is a reoccurring theme that after the half time we take it to a new level. Expectedly, the R9 x Ronaldinho x Rivaldo triangle that is Caspar, Foster and Van Every dominated the half. Caspar dipping in a free kick from range, before another Van Every header sealed the result. Marlborough chances

were far and few between, and after Winchester had sloppily conceded early on, the back line resembled Spain's World Cup winning defence in 2010. Foster scored the final goal of the game, rounding the goalkeeper before passing it into an empty net. 5-1. This team have forgotten what losing feels like, and although not at their very best today, are closer than ever and looking forward to the big games in the upcoming weeks. We play Wellington College (A) in the ISFA trophy on Tuesday. Thank you everyone. (Will Whitehead, A)