

M.A. HART PAGE CROFT CUP FINAL

Thursday 28th March 2019

at Hurn Bridge, Christchurch

GOTHAM 2 QUEENS PARK ATHLETIC 1 aet



There was late drama in the M.A. HART PAGE CROFT CUP FINAL when Gotham substitute Joe Sullivan drilled home a twenty yard free kick with just two minutes of extra time remaining to clinch a 2-1 victory over Queens Park Athletic in a bruising, hard fought game at Hurn Bridge.

Gotham had a lucky escape in the first period of extra time though when Park's leading marksman Martin Smith put his penalty kick over the bar.

Gotham were into their stride quickly from the start, dominating the early exchanges with Queens Park not allowed to settle.

Lee Pearson combined well with Ryan Ashford midway through the first half to create an opening but the advancing QPA goalkeeper Harry Shaw spread himself well to divert Pearson's shot for a corner.

Gotham took the lead in the 29th minute when the ball was played behind the defence for **Adam Louka** to clip it over Shaw and into the back of the net.

Parks's Tom Pepper made a good run down the left ten minutes before the interval to set up Dean Mellor but Gotham defender Paul Blenman managed to make a timely challenge.

Mike Wheeler was fouled by Ashford outside the Gotham penalty area in the 40th minute and **Dean Mellor** equalised for QPA with a dipping free kick which escaped goalkeeper Ben Hatch's grasp and rolled into the net.

The second half began with Louka slipped the ball back to Sheridan on the edge of the QPA box and the Gotham skipper's low shot brought an excellent diving save from Shaw.

Queens Park then began to look the more threatening they went close on several occasions.

Mellor's curling free kick from just inside Gotham half in the 63rd minute found Wheeler running in but Ben Hatch was perfectly position to save.

Then Pepper's low cross from the left found Martin Smith but Gotham defender Mike Barber's perfectly timed challenge sent the ball up and over the bar.

Pepper gave his man the slip in the 72nd minute to get in a superb cross from the right. Smith met it with a header which was pushed away by Hatch with Smith just unable to convert the rebound.

QPA were reduced to ten men when Mike Wheeler was shown a second yellow card in the 80th minute after being adjudged to have fouled Sheridan. They continued to press though and Barber had to make two blocks in quick succession, first from Lloyd Pearce and then from Mellor.

With the first period of extra time coming to a close, Queens Park front man Lloyd Pearce raced away down the right and was brought down in the box by Paul Blenman. Referee Chris Sheppard had no hesitation in awarding a penalty but Martin Smith put the spot kick over the bar.

Gotham skipper Shane Sheridan saw red ten minutes from the end of extra time when, after squeezing between Smith and Doe, he lunged into a challenge on Harry Shaw who had dived on the ball.

Just when it looked as if the game would have to be decided on penalties, JJ Rayner was penalised for a challenge just outside the QPA penalty area. As **Joe Sullivan** stepped up to take the free kick, Gotham substitute Jacob Lawrence shunted the defensive wall sideways to create a gap. Shaw managed to get his hands to the free kick but was unable to keep it out.

Queens Park Athletic centre forward **Tom Pepper** was chosen for the **Man of the Match** award by BHFL President & Chairman Mike Fowler.



Gotham :- Ben Hatch, Shane Fox, Joe Bond (Joe Sullivan 83 mins), Michael Barber, Lee Pearson, Ryan Ashford (Scott Hancox 66mins), Shane Sheridan, Adam Louka (Charlie Paterson 77mins), Tom Baker (Jacob Lawrence 90 mins), Ollie Peckham, Paul Blenman.



Queens Park Athletic :- Harry Shaw, Brandon Doe, Stuart Senior (Gary Cole 12mins)(Danny Jacubiszyn 55 mins)(Chris Cox 90 mins), JJ Rayner, Harry Montacute (Adam Clark 75 mins), Dean Mellor (Mark McCarthy 99 mins), Mike Wheeler, Tom Pepper, Luke Hughes, Lloyd Pearce, Martin Smith.