

M.A. HART ROBBINS CUP FINAL

Thursday 13th April 2023 at Hurn Bridge

WEST HOWE 0 EAST CHRISTCHURCH SSC 1

Seasoned campaigner Gavin Haynes scored the vital goal fifteen minutes from time to give hundred per cent Division One leaders East Christchurch SSC the verdict 1-0 against West Howe in the M.A. HART ROBBINS CUP FINAL at Hurn Bridge. Darren Orchard delivered a free kick into the West Howe penalty area and the East Christchurch defender got to it before the advancing goalkeeper to steer the ball home.

East Christchurch went on the offensive from the start, creating a succession of chances but they were denied by some outstanding defending from West Howe.

A Darren Orchard free kick into the West Howe penalty area in the early minutes was headed goalwards by Dan Hancock but West Howe defender Andy Birch slid in to hook the ball to safety as Dan Brown lunged to try to steer it in.

Levi Ridealgh put Dan Brown through but West Howe goalkeeper George Gudge came out to block the shot with his legs and the ball came out to the edge of the penalty area where Dave Midgley met it with a shot that went wide.

Another Darren Orchard free kick into the West Howe penalty area in the 16th minute found Gavin Haynes but, under pressure from Andy Birch and Dan Edwards, the East Christchurch defender could only hook his shot wide of the post.

An enterprising run by SSC's left back Andrei Munteanu ended when was brought down just outside the penalty area in the 18th minute and Dave Midgley's low free kick through the defensive wall was partially saved by George Gudge who then dived bravely at the feet of Dan Brown and Dan Hancock who were following up.

West Howe skipper Ritchie Whiting rescued his side on the half hour when, following a long throw that took a deflection off Andy Birch, Dan Brown got the

ball past George Gedge but, as he went to steer it into the empty net, Whiting got back to make a superb goal line clearance.

With the first half drawing to a close, Andrei Munteanu went on a run down the left to fire the ball across the face of the goal while, in stoppage time, central defender Dan Whitehouse came forward to meet a corner from the right and head it over the bar.

Alex Whitehouse pick up the ball in the half way line on the hour and went on a run through the middle, going past Ritchie Whiting and Jacob Monk before being brought down by Dan Dominy. The West Howe man was shown a yellow card for bringing down the East Christchurch skipper.

Alex Whitehouse went across the edge of the penalty area in the 67th minute to get in a shot on the turn that George Gedge in the West Howe goal was pleased to see bounce just wide of the far post.

A long throw to the far post by West Howe's Dan Edwards was headed out and Edwards got on the ball again, neatly creating the opening to get in a dangerous cross from the left but, once again, East Christchurch's well drilled defence closed ranks to head the ball away.

A handling offence just inside the West Howe half gave Darren Orchard the opportunity to deliver a free kick to the far post in the 75th minute and, as West Howe goalkeeper George Gedge came off his line to meet the cross, **GAVIN HAYNES** got to the ball first to prod it home.

Great work out on the left again by Dan Edwards resulted in an inviting cross to the far post which was well taken under pressure by East Christchurch goalkeeper Dan Sansom.

West Howe increased their efforts to breach the East Christchurch SSC defence with crosses into the danger area but the League leaders are notoriously miserly when it comes to giving away goals and dealt with all that was thrown at them.

West Howe forced a corner on the right in stoppage time and, as the ball arrived in the crowded goalmouth, the referee blew for an infringement before the ball came out to Dan Dominey who volleyed it into the back of the net.

A first trophy of the season then for East Christchurch SSC who hope to clinch the Division One title before returning to Hurn Bridge next week for the rearranged Mark Hart Sunday Senior Cup final.

East Christchurch SSC skipper **Alex Whitehouse** was chosen for the **Man of the Match** award by BFL President Mike Fowler.



Before the trophy could be presented to the skipper of East Christchurch SSC their Romanian left back Andrei Munteanu brought his girlfriend onto the pitch and, in front of his team mates, got down on one knee and proposed to her. To rapturous applause she said yes.



West Howe : George Gudge, Liam Whittle (Rhys Evans 69 mins), Reece Fields, Andy Birch, Dan Dominy, Gareth Else (Ellis George 79 mins), Dan Edwards, Sam Davis, Ritchie Whiting, Jake Fields, Jacob Monk (Tommy King 88 mins),

Unused substitutes : Lyam Teixeira and Jordan Whittle.



East Christchurch SSC : Dan Sansom, Andrei Munteanu, Dan Whitehouse, Dan Hancock, Darren Orchard (Jordi Gentle 84 mins), Dan Brown (Alex Hancox 68 mins), Liam Griffin (Alex Catana 74 mins), Levi Ridealgh, Gavin Haynes, Alex Whitehouse (Aidan Blackburn), Dave Midgley.

Unused substitute : Jack Smith.

