

# ST JAMES MATCH REPORT

## ALL 4 – 1 AND ONE FOR ALL

Reported by: Mr S. Monaghan 11<sup>th</sup> October 2022

St James battled back from a difficult opening game defeat to St Aloysius, smashing four past Toner Avenue to kick off their Mariners League campaign in style.

It was always a big ask coming up against league favourites St Aloysius in game one of the league at Hebburn Comprehensive School, but the team walked off at full time with their heads held high despite the 3-0 score line, which in truth did not flatter St Aloysius.

### St Aloysius dominant from the outset

Game one kicked off with St Aloysius firmly in control of the early exchanges, and it wasn't long before they were on the scoresheet. A mix up in the St James defence saw the number 6 go through, and he squared it perfectly for an easy tap in for number 9 to give the team in blue the perfect start.

St James struggled to string any meaningful passes together, with a few looking nervous for their first game for the school. In the changed strip of red, they couldn't find any answers to the pressing game from St Aloysius, and goal number two came soon after for them. A ricochet off the back of Archie's head was believed to have gone into the net; however if VAR was in force, Stockley Park would undoubtedly have deemed Luis' goal line clearance to be a goal-saving one.



There could be no doubt whatsoever though, about goal number 3. Despite Jack pulling off save after save in the St James goal, there was nothing he could do to stop St Aloysius making it a first half treble.



3-0 down at half-time, plenty would have thrown in the proverbial towel, but not this group of lads. All that was asked of them at the break, was to treat it as 0-0 again for the second period, and not to concede any more sloppy goals. And boy did they answer the call. They looked like a completely different team and matched St Aloysius stride for stride. The lads showed plenty of heart, with Finn and Lucas defending gallantly at the back, and Tyler giving his all to press from the front. Fingertips from Jack also kept a dangerous free kick out. The game finished 3-0, with something to build upon for the Toner Avenue game.

### What a difference a game makes, 24 little minutes

As the popular song goes, "the difference is you" and what a resilient attitude the lads showed in the second game. Every single player got their head up, fighting for every ball and starting to believe in their ability as a team.

An early goal from Captain Tyler set the tone for the first half, with his trademark celebration roll out in full force after finding the net. St James continued to push for a second, and it arrived after a pile-driver from Kai gave the goalkeeper no chance. Toner Avenue did respond with a flurry of shots of their own, but Jack was equal to everything, commanding his box and keeping the defence in check.

With a two goal lead going into the second half, Luis moved up front and what a decision it proved to be. His link up play with Kai and Lewis was fantastic, with the latter threading a few balls through to Foster to run on to.



It was Luis who grabbed the third though, but not until he had hit every part of the Toner frame of the goal. The post, then the bar, then the post were all hit, before he finally got the luck his endeavour deserved to fire home.

Indeed, it was Winton who made it a brace a minute later, meeting a corner with an unstoppable head. Again it hit the crossbar, but this time it nestled into the net.

The lads were a little complacent thereafter, and chances were spurned to add a few more strike. Toner Avenue defended well from then on, and deservedly scored a consolation in the dying embers of the contest.

St James ran out 4-1 winners, and go into Thursday's Bishop Cup competition having learnt a great deal about their collective character.

The only way is up!



### MAN OF THE MATCH

**Jack Collingwood**