



Futsal to fly the flag for York at national BUCS Championships

DAN HYDE



York's victorious Futsal team celebrate qualification to the BUCS Championships next month, following wins against Durham and Teesside in a difficult tournament in Middlesbrough

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BY FLINGING himself off a Cretan mountain all those years ago, Icarus tried to escape exile from Greece; to strive beyond mediocrity, to achieve what men thought impossible. York's Futsal team did a similar thing last Sunday.

With their qualification to the BUCS Championships in Sheffield next month, they are soaring towards a goal many would have written off as a demented fantasy at the start of the year. Say it quietly: York are the best Futsal team in the north of England. At this university we are used only to occasional beacons of success.

Even then, no Everests are

conquered, only Ben Nevises; there are no Usain Bolts, only Frankie Frederickses; no Raymond van Barnevelds, only Vincent van der Voorts. The success of the Futsal team suggests that where there once was no hope, there is now.

From their four games this Sunday, the futsalers needed six points. Sounds easy on paper, but the nature of the competition meant that this was to be a formidable undertaking. Arch-rivals Teesside, a team they have never defeated, and serial table-toppers Stirling stood in the way.

The ghosts of failed campaigns in previous years weighed heavily on the players' shoulders, and when it comes to qualification, the Futsal team has had more near-misses than a cross-eyed pilot.

This was their biggest chance to put right past wrongs.

The operation started as planned with a 6-3 dissection of Durham. Bling-coated gangsta rapper-cum-goalgetter, Anton Murphy, was sensational in a kind of pivot role, masterfully holding up play with his back to goal. Murphy is the leading goalscorer in the north of England, bagging a perfect ten goals. He was ebullient about his achievement, saying: "it makes me believe what people don't believe" and "I feel like throwing a champagne glass in the air."

Whilst Murphy stood out, the rest of the York team did well to stand up to the opposition's physicality, evidenced in the mangled knees of Dan Hyde and the contorted wreck that is Jack Crane's shin.

Despite his roughhousing, Crane went on to grab a brace in this game, providing momentum for the rest of the tournament.

Stirling, living up to their name, marched into a 3-1 lead with two lucky goals. But York showed incredible character mounting a sensational comeback, led by captain James Grey's two goals, to pull things back to 3-3.

Then, with a few minutes remaining, Dan Hyde slipped by two Stirling defenders before elegantly pirouetting and smashing a stonker into the roof of the net. If York could hold on, they would qualify. But then: disaster. A calamity at the back allowed a Stirling equaliser. York would have to beat Teesside in the next round.

And cometh the hour, cometh

the men. It was crunch time. A time for boys to become men. A time for those men to then stand up and be counted. And that they did, in what some have described as the team's greatest ever performance. Utterly decimating Teesside spiritually and in a football sense, York walked away 8-2 victors, with a stunning goal from Henney putting delicious icing on the victory cake.

All that remained was the formality of a dead rubber (loss) to Leeds Met in the final game. But York didn't care. They achieved a feat approaching the magnitude of North Korea's victory over Italy in 1966. Unlike the Korean players, who were shot on return to their native land for failing to defeat Portugal, the futsalers will be lauded on campus for months to come.

BUCS backlog casts doubt on Varsity

Weather induced fixtures rearrangements for a number of York's sports teams have threatened the annual Varsity contest against St. John on February 25.

Varsity >> P23



Hitting the target: Archery at York

Arguably the safest bet for victory at Roses, York's archery club are working hard to give a sometimes misunderstood sport a higher profile.

Team Profile >> P21

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Sports theme at UGM meeting

Last Thursday's UGM featured a motions for elite sports funding initiated by skier Max Hardy, a sports science department and earlier term dates.

Max Hardy >> P21

