

Tigers fail to roar

Blyth Sp..... 1

Hyde Utd..... 1

THIS was the classic game of two halves and the draw was, in reality, a fair result.

Blyth had much the better of the first period, but Hyde might well have taken all three points if they had levelled earlier.

However, they nearly leaked a goal in the first minute. Jason Ainsley beat George Switzer, and crossed, but Billy Garton cleared while under pressure from Jon Atkinson.

Blyth continued to press, and threatened after six minutes when Cole hooked the ball over from a Martin Pike corner. Switzer then had to clear from Atkinson, at the expense of a corner.

Tigers keeper Jon Scargill saved a fierce drive from Pike, before Hyde went close on 28 minutes. Ged Kimmins sent a superb through ball to put Lutel James clear, but John Burridge easily saved his first-time shot.

With Spartans having most of the first-half play, central defenders Garton and Colin Lambert were put to the test - but came through with flying colours.

Also, as Blyth won corner after corner, Scargill, was in commanding form.

Spartans finally took the lead on 36 minutes. Michael Farrey cut inside from the right and laid the ball off for Ainsley, who scored with a 20-yard shot that went in off the far post.

It was the 54th minute that the character of the game changed. Blyth made a double substitution, bringing on midfielder Mark Todd and forward

Damian Henderson, for Jason Ainsley - possibly their best player - and leading scorer Keith Fletcher. The switch did not work, and Blyth seemed to lose all their momentum.

Hyde jumped into the driving seat, and it seemed only a matter of time before they scored. James went desperately close when he turned the ball just past the post.

However, there were only nine minutes left when the 'Tigers' most effective player, Kimmins, equalised with a scissor kick from Jason Gallagher's cross.

Blyth: Burridge, Farrey, Pike, Tinkler, Gamble, Cole, Ainsley, Renforth, Atkinson, Fletcher, McGargle. Subs: Todd for Ainsley (54), Henderson for Fletcher (54), McGarrigle for McGargle (74).

Hyde: Scargill 8, Finley 7, Switzer 8, Wilson 8, Garton 8, Lambert 8, Kimmins 9, Henshaw 8, James 8, Snape 7, Nolan 7. Subs: Varden 8 for Henshaw (59), Brockie 7 for James (77), Gallagher 7 for Snape (64).

Ref: Geoff Hartley (York).