

Teams – Boxted Lodgers Vs St Osyth
Comp – Border League Division One
Venue – Cage Lane, Boxted.

After a disappointing defeat in the League Cup the previous week, boss Carl Thompson and Scott Fowler were hoping for a return to winning ways in the League after a fine start against Lawford four weeks earlier. The loss to Clacton had played heavily on everyone's minds during the lead up to the game, particularly after a first half in Clacton where the Lodgers dominated, playing some of their best football for sometime. And so, Thompson and Fowler made no alterations to the starting eleven, giving them the opportunity to make up for their last outing.

But in truth, the only plus point from the entire match arrived in the closing moments of the second half when France-bound Gary Trueman popped up to sign-off with a stylish goal, volleying home Toby Spencer-Campbell's deep left-hand centre via crossbar and post. It summed up his time in Colchester too; when he scores, they usually look pretty good.

It wasn't enough to lift spirits, though, as Boxted were well and truly beaten by a side fighting for their lives and the survival of their club.

The St Osyth team came into the match on the back of two no-shows and a 6-2 defeat at the hands of Rowhedge, and may not have relished a trip to the Cage as the Lodgers were looking for two out of two in the league. But the visitors looked the far more cohesive unit, playing a neat passing style through midfield with passion and determination. Rarely did they lose a 50-50 or a second ball and, after escaping twice when first the linesman's flag snuffed out a Chris Price run on goal, then Jamie Bradbury's turn and cross towards Kieran Francis was snatched away by the keeper, the Toosey boys began to dominate.

With Boxted down to ten men, while Bradbury received treatment to a groin injury, St Osyth struck. Their striker was given far too much time and space 12 yards out with his back to goal. He waited for the right moment before turning and firing into the bottom corner leaving Neil Addington stranded.

The Lodgers needed to get a grip of the game if they were to get back into it, and when a long kick from Addington caught the defence off guard, Bradbury sneaked in behind and was bearing down on the keeper. His first time shot wasn't great, and the keeper palmed it away. However, Price was on hand just outside the area and he lifted the ball goalwards. As it was about to cross the line, the last defender hooked the ball from under the bar with his hand. The referee had no hesitation in pointing to the spot, but was confused over who handled. Having consulted her assistant, she eventually dismissed their full-back and Price placed his kick perfectly just inside the upright.

The game was there for the taking now, as Toosey heads dropped and arguing crept in. The home side just had to step up to the plate. But instead, St Osyth rallied and continued to work hard putting pressure on Boxted to force mistakes.

With only a couple of minutes of the first half remaining, Charlie Osborne was caught in possession on the edge of the box and gave away the foul that led to St Osyth's second. In fairness to them, their well worked short free-kick and cross was an excellent piece of football, but the marking at the back post was lacklustre as two St Osyth players were free to fight between themselves for the last touch to nod in.

Half Time – 1-2

At the break Thompson, spotting that St Osyth were winning the midfield battle, introduced Josh Congdon as a straight swap for Liam Macklin, while Spencer-Campbell replaced Bradbury, allowing Francis to move to his favoured striker's role and Terry Wash switching to the right flank. While the newcomers were lively

and provided another option for Boxted, it wasn't long before things went from bad to worse. St Osyth capitalised twice on errors at the back early on in the second period to go 4-1 up a give the Lodgers a mountain to climb.

Their third goal came from.... (Didn't see it).

Shortly after, a free-kick on the right was crossed into the dangerzone, and only the visiting forwards seemed to react to the loose ball and prod home for a comfortable and deserved three-goal lead. Even this failed to stir the home team, and they could have found themselves further behind as the hard-working St Osyth front line picked holes in the defence.

But the final word of the day was to be left to Trueman, a late substitute for Wash, just 24 hours before he was to head for a new life in Nice, via South Africa. Spencer-Campbell found space of the left to cross, and the Predator's volley was crisp, clean and clinical. Something he can take away to remember the Lodgers by - while everything else from the game the rest of the club will want to forget.

Final Score – 2-4

Team: Neil Addington, Andrew Lawson, Andy Hart, Steve Driver, Chris Sturdy, Charlie Osborne (c), Liam Macklin (Josh Congdon), Chris Price, Jamie Bradbury (Toby Spencer-Campbell), Kieran Francis, Terry Wash (Gary Trueman).

Sub not used: Simon King

Goals (assists): Price (pen), Trueman (Spencer-Campbell)