



ALL THE FESTIVE FOOTBALL ACTION

Page 75

Observer Sport

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COLES LANE CLUBS PREPARE FOR BANK HOLIDAY DERBY DAY



New recruits give Evans a nice headache!

ROMS

ROMULUS boss Richard Evans hailed the performance of his young guns as his side prepared for the Sutton derby with a dramatic fightback at Shepshed Dynamo.

With four youth team graduates in the back five, the Roms came from two goals down in injury time to snatch a point in Leicestershire, sending Evans' charges into the derby on the back of a five-match unbeaten run.

Evans has several players ready to come back against play-off chasers Sutton on Monday (January 2, Coles Lane, kick off 3pm) but admits he will have to make some tough choices.

He said: "It was obviously concerning to have to put so many young lads into what we knew would be a physical



Richard Evans may keep faith with the kids who shone at Shepshed

battle at Shepshed, but the lads did so well they have given us a real selection headache.

"We had eight players out through one thing or another – including five defenders and one goalkeeper.

"It was Matthew O'Beirne's full debut at centre half while Cameron Lee, an under-21s midfielder, played at left back.

"Todd Evans did well too, he's come on leaps and bounds this season, and we had Lewis Exall in goal who has really matured this season and proved he is capable at this level.

"We have bodies back for the Sutton match but it will be difficult to drop those players as they were all tremendous."

Defenders Sean Robinson and Rob Evans should be back from illness, while Richard Robinson, Ben Richards-Everton and midfielder Gavin Day all return from one-match bans. Nathan Blissett is also available.

Evans added: "The Sutton match, as always, will be a great game – they are going for the play-offs and both sides are capable of scoring plenty of goals.

"This is where the 3G pitch will be a big advantage – many derbies get played on poor pitches at this time of year and it kills the game. The quality surface will suit both teams and I've got a feeling that this match will be a real cracker for both sets of supporters."

Keogh hopes Town can survive Marshall blow

ROYALS

SUTTON Coldfield Town boss Chris Keogh insists the form book will go out the window when his injury-hit promotion chasers battle tenants Romulus in Monday's Coles Lane derby.

The Royals' injury jinx has struck again in recent days with star striker Craig Marshall – the Evo-Stik Division One South joint top scorer – ruled out for the season with knee ligament damage.

Marshall's name is added to an injury list that has numbered double figures this campaign but despite the problems Sutton are still just a place outside the play-offs.

Keogh said: "Craig's injury is another massive blow for us – he's the league's joint top scorer and you can't replace



Sutton boss Chris Keogh is battling an injury list that never seems to end

that sort of player really. It's just been a catalogue of nightmare injuries throughout the season for us.

"We're looking to get a couple of players in but it's unlikely we will be able to bring anyone here in time for Monday's game.

"We brought (ex-Tamworth striker) Scott Rickards in to play alongside Craig but now he'll have to replace him, although Scott can play in midfield too.

"But with Jon Jones' sending off and then another needless sending off for Harry Harris (in the 2-0 Boxing Day

win against Coalville – see page 75), it's one thing on top of another.

"We had a great start to the season and then a disappointing November/December – but it was a very good win against Coalville and hopefully that will give us a bit of confidence.

"Against Romulus, form always goes out of the window – it's all about the blood and thunder of a local derby and we always look forward to it.

"But it's a game that, if we are going to keep pressure on the sides above us, we need to be looking to get three points from."

Keogh will have Harris available for the derby clash as his suspension does not begin until after that game.

He also has defender Mat Jackson nearing full fitness after four months out.



PBSSS star Hasna Hakim has come to the attention of British selectors.

Hasna has a great future in the pool

SWIMMING

PERRY Beeches and Sutton Swim Squad star Hasna Hakim has been identified as a potential star of the future.

The 13-year-old was selected to attend a British Disability Swimming World Class Talent camp at Braunstone Pool in Leicester.

The day was made up of lots of training, but Hakim was also given an introduction to British Swimming.

She has been in fine form this year and has already achieved the qualification times for the British Gas Swimming British Championships, which has qualified her for the 2012 events.

The championships are to be held in March where Hakim will join the likes of Rebecca Adlington and Ellie Simmonds in competition.

Meanwhile, Perry Beeches have also named Lucy Gale and Dan Smith as team captains for 2012.

Boldmere earn the right to grace national stage again

SWIMMING

By **MICHAEL BEARDMORE**
Sports reporter

BOLDMERE Swimming Club has earned the chance to shine on the national stage again – after its A team qualified for the 2012 National B Final at Ponds Forge in Sheffield.

Going into the final round of the Arena National League (West Midlands) Division 1, Boldmere 'A', City of Coventry and City of Derby were all locked on 27 league points.

At the final gala, Boldmere finished behind Derby and Coventry, who gained the two automatic national final spots up for grabs – but once results were collated around the country, Boldmere's times were good enough to give them a place too.

Matt Price was among the individual winners for Boldmere – he won the 11/u backstroke in a personal best and new club record of 34.16secs.

Price followed that up with another personal best in winning the 50m fly.

Jake Dixon followed suit with two wins in the 13/u 100m breaststroke and fly while Givenchy Sneekes (15/u 100m freestyle), Josh Winnicott (15/u breaststroke), Bradley Lynch (15/u 100m freestyle) and Kate Davies (11/u 50m breaststroke) also claimed victories.

There were second places for Archie Langston (11/u 50m

free), Morgan Harlow (13/u 100m free, PB), Ben Stanford (13/u 100m free, club record) and Emily Gordon (100m breaststroke).

It was a clean sweep of relay wins for the boys' 11/u (Price, Ryan Andrews, Tom Bloor and Langston) and 15/u squads (Dixon, Steve Wilson, Winnicott and Lynch) in both freestyle and medley events, the latter quartet recording club records in both their events.

In other club records, Kristie Hackett set a new open CR in the girls' 100m fly with 1.06.91mins and Ben Stanford lowered the 13/u 100m back time to 1.15.47mins.

Elsewhere, Boldmere's B team swam well in the Final of Division Two of the Arena National League, with Ben Campbell (100m freestyle) and Luke Davies (100m breaststroke) both claiming first place in personal best times.

Campbell was named boys' gala star for Boldmere for his efforts, while Alex Dolan, who set a PB in the open 100m freestyle, claimed the girls' award.

Joel Cunningham and Leighton Palmer-Whyte were other Boldmere swimmers to claim top three spots.

There was a great night for Boldmere's C team too as they took third place in the third round of Division Three of the Arena National League in Nuneaton.

Among the ten first place finishes for Boldmere C were the boys' 11/u freestyle relay



Alex Dolan and Ben Campbell were Boldmere B team's Gala Stars. Picture by Steve Harlow

team who were spurred on by outstanding legs from Sam Morris and Jack Dobson.

The ladies' open medley relay team of Ellie West, Caitlin Meade, Charlotte Weston and Laura Walford also stormed to first place.

Individual wins went to girls' star of the gala Weston (ladies' open 100m breaststroke) in a new personal best of 1.24.68mins, and Meade in the 15/u breaststroke.

In the boys' 15/u 100m

breaststroke, boys' gala star Chris Joyce claimed second place in a new personal best time of 1.27.81mins.

Other individual wins went to Jack Dobson (11/u 50m fly), Daniel Lynch-Davies (15/u 100m backstroke), Lois West (13/u 100m fly) and Sam Morris (11/u 50m freestyle).

The final accolade went to the girls' 6x2 freestyle relay team of Meade, Emma Buckroyd, Weston, Walford, Ellie West and Tully Kearney.

Published by Central Independent News and Media, Tamworth. Printed by Northcliffe Press Midlands.

ISSN 1369-0809



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52