

F.A. COUNTY YOUTH CUP ROUND 2
SATURDAY 5 NOVEMBER 2011
AT NORTHAMPTON SILEBY RANGERS FC

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE 2 WORCESTERSHIRE 3

Worcestershire rocketed into Round 3 of The FA County Youth Cup with a thrilling odd goal in five victory against Northamptonshire, with debutant Adam Ward turning in a 5 star man of the match performance, having tormenting the home defence throughout, and James Schembri hitting a two goal salvo.

Having dominated the opening 10 minutes, the hosts found themselves a goal down in the 13th minute with Worcestershire skipper Connor Smith winning a crucial ball in midfield and slipping the ball through to James Schembri who drilled the ball past 'keeper Kyle Swailes.

The visitors came close to doubling their lead with Schembri seeing his flicked header drift narrowly wide and Jack Cullity's fierce shot being saved by Swailes at the second attempt.

Northamptonshire drew level on 26 minutes when slack defending saw Rajay Banton square the ball across the 6 yard box to the unmarked Korey Morgan who had the simple task of rolling the ball into an empty net.

Play swung from end to end with Schembri being denied a second goal when his shot rebounded to safety off the goalpost, whilst at the other end 'keeper Joshua Smith made a fine fingertip save from Jordan Pendered's fierce 20 yard shot.

It was the visitors who regained the lead a minute from half time when, after a sweeping move with the ball being moved from left to right, the ball was played to the feet of Jack Lodge and he swept the ball under the advancing Swailes into the net.

HALF TIME 1-2

Worcestershire started the second half on the offensive with two mazy runs from Adam Ward setting up Schembri who saw two shots well saved by Swailes and the 'keeper then made an outstanding save to tip Harry Osborne's well struck free kick over the bar.

Eventually Worcestershire's pressure was rewarded in the 56th minute when Connor Smith played the ball through to Schembri and he calmly lobbed the ball over Swailes into the net to give the visitors a two goal advantage.

Northamptonshire made two substitutions in an effort to get back into the game and were rewarded in the 74th minute with a superb goal from the ever dangerous Korey Morgan, who turned on the edge of the penalty area and rifled an unstoppable shot into the roof of the net and only another fine fingertip save from Joshua Smith prevented Pendered from leveling the tie a minute later.

Worcestershire pushed hard for a fourth goal to kill off Northamptonshire's challenge, with the outstanding Adam Ward three times being denied the goal his display so richly deserved by great saves from the busy Swailes.

Having failed to close out the game, the Worcestershire defence were subjected to a torrid final five minutes as Northamptonshire strived desperately for an equaliser to take the game into extra time. Joshua Smith made a stunning save from Ed Costiuk's well struck free kick and the hosts forced a succession of corners which the visitors resolutely defended until the final whistle brought relief and a well-earned victory.

Worcestershire's reward is another away tie next month against either local rivals Herefordshire or Sussex in Round 3.

After the match Chris Smith was presented with his County Cap having completed ten competitive appearances for Worcestershire.

Worcestershire: Joshua Smith; Ben Hayes, Dominic Wheeler, Christopher Neilson, Tom Weaver, Jack Lodge; Adam Ward, Connor Smith, Jack Cullity (Chris Smith 60), James Schembri (Oliver Butler 75), Tom Allard (Harry Osborne 27).