

YOUTH FOOTBALL

Minehead under-11's played host to Watchet last Thursday evening as part of their build up to the new league season.

Early play favoured Minehead with Josh Ruston looking very lively up front. After striking the bar with a fierce shot the striker put his team ahead followed good interpassing between Jack Delbridge and Karl Middleton-Smith. Joel Lynch then combined with Middleton-Smith to set up Ruston for a second goal. Newcomer Alistair Madgewick almost made it three but keeper Jamie Hodgson pulled off a good save. Watchet got back into the game when a shot rebounded off Owen Thresher back to the kicker and he struck it past Joe Ferris. Watchet failed to take advantage of a number of free kicks around the edge of the penalty area and were made to pay when Middleton-Smith restored Minehead's two goal advantage which was the half time score.

After Ruston had scored a fourth for Minehead in the opening minutes of the second half Watchet's resistance collapsed. Ruston capitalised on some poor defending with some terrific quick fire shooting. He added a further six goals to his individual tally whilst Madgewick and Lynch one apiece to give Minehead a final 11-2 win.

Team: Joe Ferris, Tom Marlow, Owen Thresher, Charlie Smith, Jordan Baker, Alistair Madgewick, Karl Middleton-Smith, Jack Delbridge, Owen Hamblin, Josh Ruston, Joel Lynch, Nial Gibson.

Minehead continued their build up for the new league season with a third home match last Saturday September 5th, this time the visitors being Staplegrove.

Although Minehead got off to a perfect start when a high lob by Ben Willmets dropped over the keeper's head and into the net Staplegrove proved very lively opponents. They were well organised and strong to close down the Minehead players on every occasion. Alistair Madgewick, who again impressed with the quality of his distribution found Josh Ruston with a lovely through ball but the striker uncharacteristically pulled it wide of the goal with only the keeper to beat. Then some incisive play by Staplegrove led to Joe Ferris making an excellent save with his legs to prevent an equaliser. Minehead increased their lead when Jack Delbridge played a fine ball through a rather square Staplegrove defence and there was Ruston to tuck it past the keeper.

After the break Willmets stretched his legs on several occasions down the left and produced some inviting crosses but nobody was on hand to finish them off. Madgewick and Karl Middleton-Smith combined to give Ruston another chance but his effort was very well saved by the Staplegrove keeper. The visitors did their fair share of attacking but Owen Thresher, Dan Boulton, Charlie Smith and Jordan Baker defended extremely efficiently. Ruston continued to be a major worry to the Staplegrove defenders and it came as no surprise when he seized on to a loose ball and found space to shoot past the keeper for a third goal. Middleton-Smith added a fourth shortly afterwards when stroked in a very good shot from the edge of the penalty area that gave the keeper no chance.

Matt Ronan, having his first outing of the season added that extra dimension to the Minehead midfield with his neat footwork and short passing skills. He was extremely unlucky not to score when he rounded the keeper and poked the ball goalwards only for Ruston to be flagged offside. Staplegrove were rather unfortunate to be four goals down and they continued to press forward. They eventually got their reward when the Minehead defence failed to clear a corner and the ball was headed past Ferris from close range. They might have had a second moments later when Middleton-Smith tripped a striker in the penalty area but the resultant kick went wide.

Ruston was the provider when he gave Boulton a great chance to score but the latter fired high and wide. In the closing minutes Madgewick produced another great through ball which Ruston ran on to. His shot cannoned off the keeper, came back and hit him on legs and went straight back into the net.

Team: Joe Ferris, Jamie Hobbs, Owen Thresher, Dan Boulton, Charlie Smith, Jordan Baker, Alistair Madgewick, Karl Middleton-Smith, Jack Delbridge, Matt Ronan, Josh Ruston, Ben Willmets.