

YOUTH FOOTBALL

Minehead under-11's concluded their pre-season friendlies with an away fixture against Holway. Although established a two goal lead they slumped to an eventual 5-2 defeat after giving a woeful second half performance.

Minehead were ahead inside a minute when Josh Ruston latched on to a through ball from Karl Middleton-Smith and shot high into the net. Minehead were constantly looking to find Ruston with balls over or through the Holway defence. Alistair Madgewick produced one such ball but Ruston's final effort went over the bar. Holway looked a very good side as they pushed forward and created a lot of chances. Their strikers got in behind the Minehead defence but squandered several golden opportunities. Against the run of play Minehead went further ahead when Middleton-Smith's free kick again found Ruston who ran on to shoot past the Holway keeper.

Holway battled very hard to get back into the match and did so just before half time when a long ball out of defence caught Minehead's defence rather square and the ball was despatched past a helpless Joe Ferris. Holway pressed fiercely in the remaining minutes before the interval and only a last ditch tackle from Middleton-Smith and some rather desperate clearances from consecutive corners enabled Minehead to hang on to a lead they hardly deserved.

In the second half Minehead might have stretched their lead when Jack Delbridge just failed to connect fully with a header from Middleton-Smith's corner. The crucial moment of the match came moments later when Owen Thresher allowed himself to be caught in possession inside his own penalty area with the result that Holway managed to equalise. After that it was all the home team. They played some excellent attacking football but Minehead helped by being slow to the ball and all too often just kicking wildly rather than trying to find a team mate with a pass. Holway's third goal came from another bad mistake. This time it was Delbridge who got caught in possession midway inside his own half. The ball was quickly played forward and the finish gave Ferris no chance. A rampant Holway scored twice more despite some valiant defending from Dan Boulton in particular.

Minehead might have scored twice near the close. First a long kick from Ferris gave Joel Lynch a clear run on goal with only the keeper to beat but his effort went straight at the Holway custodian. Then a lovely piece of play by Matt Ronan on the right led to him finding Ruston but the striker's shot on the turn was not good enough to beat the Holway keeper. A disappointing performance by Minehead but hopefully they will learn some valuable lessons from it

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

Minehead opened their league programme with a home match against Nether Stowey last Saturday September 12th.

Minehead opened brightly and quickly put the visitors under pressure. A long range shot from Dan Boulton was just off target and Karl Middleton-Smith brought a fine save from the Stowey keeper who went on to have an outstanding game. Matt Ronan's looping shot was just wide but it was Middleton-Smith who broke the deadlock with a lovely low shot from the edge of the penalty area that went into the far corner of the net. Minehead continued well on top. The tricky Ronan set up Jack Delbridge but his shot was brilliantly saved by the Stowey keeper. The visitors had a great opportunity to equalise when a poor throw out from Ferris went straight to a striker but he failed to make the most of his chance. Minehead went further ahead when some good build up play down the right by Jack Stubbs and Jamie Hobbs ended with Delbridge hammering in a shot from distance that left the keeper helpless. Stowey rarely threatened but on one occasion Ferris had to make a smart save to keep his goal intact.

Minehead's relentless pressure started to take its toll as the second half progressed. Ruston latched on to a poor goal kick to fire a great shot back in to make it three. Willmets sot over following a Middleton-Smith corner and the latter fired a penalty wide. But with the Minehead midfield quartet of Hobbs, Middleton-Smith, Madgewick and Ronan playing some lovely passing football Stowey's resistance virtually collapsed. Further goals from Willmets 3. Madgewick 2. plus

one each from Ronan and Jordan Baker gave Minehead a very convincing 10-0 victory.

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