

West Hill 3 Spring Town 2

An absolutely thrilling game ended in controversial circumstances when a dubious penalty decision allowed West Hill to win this exciting game.

Spring Town started off the better team and their early pressure forced some fine saves from West Hill's Scottish keeper Chris Dykes. However, it was West Hill who made the early breakthrough in the 35th minute when George Downing headed a delightful cross from Greek winger Oliver Toffa past the helpless goalkeeper. Spring Town responded well and exactly 5 minutes later they were level when Mike Bruce's deflected free-kick went in off the near post. This was the least they deserved as they entered half time.

Due to an ongoing muscle injury, Spring Town's leading scorer Bruce was forced off and replaced by the inconsistent performing Adam Baker. Despite the wet and windy weather, both teams played some excellent football passing the ball with ease. West Hill was now the more dominant side and winger Toffa's trickery was a constant threat. It was Toffa again who was the catalyst for Hill's second goal as his sublime flick cut open the Spring Town defence and Downing gratefully obliged as he stroked the ball in to the bottom corner of the net.

With twenty minutes to go, Spring Town made another substitution by bringing on 17-year-old Callum West to support Baker in attack. Incredibly, with his first touch West pounced on a mistake at the back to level the game. Suddenly the atmosphere was electric and you could sense the excitement and nervousness on the pitch. Exhausted players began to make uncharacteristic mistakes and both teams missed clear chances to take the lead.

As the game approached injury time, both teams continued to press for a winning goal. Moments after Spring Town hit the cross bar from close range, West Hill were awarded a penalty when referee Nick Henry adjudged the impressive Dykes to have fouled Toffa. However, replays suggest that Toffa dived as there appeared to be no contact. The Spring Town manager Isaac Hughes was so outraged that he confronted referee Henry on the pitch causing the subsequent penalty to be delayed. Finally, Hughes was sent to the stands and West Hill's captain Matty Illing thumped the ball past Dykes. This sparked jubilant celebrations from the home supporters while the Spring Town players continued way beyond the final whistle.

An incredibly entertaining match with such a cruel ending for Spring Town who drop in to the relegation zone and must dust themselves down before their crucial game against Hartley Rovers on Wednesday evening.

What nationality is keeper Chris Dykes?

1 mark

Why was Spring Town's leading scorer replaced at half-time?

1 mark

Who do Spring Town face in their next match?

1 mark

Why do you think players started making uncharacteristic mistakes towards the end of the game? Please include 2 reasons

2 marks

What minute did Spring Town score their equalising goal?

1 mark

Oliver Toffa was named the official man of the match. Please find two examples from the text to support this decision

2 marks

Why was the winning penalty delayed in being taken?

1 mark

The writer described the game as thrilling and entertaining. Can you write down a synonym of thrilling or entertaining to describe the match?

1 mark