

RAF Development Cosford U23 1 – 2 ESFA England Boys U18

Friendly/Final Trial Fixture

Saturday 5th January 2019 (2.30pm)

A cool but dry afternoon at [RAF Development Cosford](#) greeted the squad of 20 players who would stake their claim for a place in the final 18 that will represent England in the Centenary Shield beginning in March.

This annual fixture usually provides a stern test for the squad and right from the off it was the home side pressing for an early opening with keeper Sam Tickle collecting confidently under pressure from a couple of set pieces.

Despite this bright start for the hosts it was England who dominated the majority of the opening half and could well have put the result beyond doubt by half time with numerous openings spurned as the RAF goal lead a charmed life.

Luke Manley had an early shot saved by the RAF keeper while Isaac Sinclair went close but was also denied by the home keeper, more England pressure with Declan Arber and Owen Windsor seeing their effort pass just inches wide of the post.



Just when it looked like the half would end without a goal, Sam Harding curled a shot beautifully into the top corner from 25 yards after spotting the home keeper off his line.

Half Time - RAF Cosford 0 v 1 England

With numerous changes in the second half the England side took a while to settle and were under pressure from the RAF although there were very few clear chances created at either side.



Adam Crowther had England's best chance in the opening exchanges of the second half, heading over from a corner just 8 yards from goal.

England perhaps should have done better with the few half chances that came their way and they were made to pay for

not taking their chances when a corner, awarded after a fantastic last ditch block by Adam Crowther, made its way to the far post where Liam Wood struck to level the scores with 15 minutes to play.

Despite this setback England showed character to re-take the lead again shortly after. RAF keeper Matt Cape, who had made a number of key saves through the match, saved a shot from Dean Rule but James Richardson followed up to hit home the rebound.

That goal broke the home side spirit and while England pressed for a third, the game ended with no further goals and a 2 – 1 win for England.



A big thank you to the RAF for hosting the fixture and providing a competitive match that should stand the squad in good stead for the tough schedule of matches in the Centenary Shield.