

APSA upset 'Side's promotion dreams

EYES DOWN: Ben Lata in action for APSA.

Photo: David Longe



LONDON APSA derailed Barkingside's Essex Senior League title challenge with a shock win at Oakeside on Monday night.

The east Londoners looked on course for a defeat when 'Side took the lead, but a Gregory Akpele free kick and a Tim Cole header dealt a huge blow to Barkingside's promotion aspirations.

APSA are now 14th in the 18-team division, with Tony Fenn's men sixth and 10 points behind table-toppers Burnham Ramblers.

Monday's win was a stark contrast to the weekend's miserable result.

APSA travelled to Essex to take on second-placed Stansted and returned to London empty handed after a 4-0 battering.

Boss John Higley was forced to field a weakened line-up with many of his first team players absent or late.

The Terence McMillan Stadium chief praised his makeshift side, but expressed his disappointment at the lack of commitment shown by the other squad members.

"The boys who went out there gave me everything in difficult conditions," he said.

"Our starting 11 was weaker than I would have liked due to players missing and lateness on Saturday.

"Saying that, once we got to grips with things, we competed quite well.

"The problem is that it was too late by then, as we were already two nil down.

"We battled in the second half and really put them under pressure, so if we had started with a stronger side, it would have been a different game."

Essex Senior League Barkingside 1 London APSA 2

The home side took just seven minutes to seize the initiative with a header from Dan Cornwell.

The pressure continued as a weary APSA tried to find their stride.

An inability to keep possession cost them 10 minutes later when they fell two goals behind.

A much-improved performance in the second half by the visitors was only rewarded with two more goals for Stansted.

Terry Spillane's men hit APSA on the counter-attack to secure a 4-0 win.

London APSA (team against Barkingside): Brown, Callaway, John Langton, Swash, Hussain, Cole, Jamie Langton, Ellis, Lata, Lutu, Akpele, McCallagh, Dakri, Shah.

■ IN OTHER Essex Senior League results, Bethnal Green United maintained their challenge for promotion with a 6-1 thrashing of fellow title hopefuls Sawbridgeworth Town.

On a fantastic night for the Greens, Anton Stephenson claimed a hat-trick, while Aynsley Gasper netted with two penalties and Harbinger Grant also scored.

Manager Jason Gardner was delighted with the display.

"Our work-rate was outstanding and we are now well-placed to catch the leaders," he said.

"Darryl Wilson's performance deserves praise. He set up two of the goals and was fouled for two of the penalties."