

Danone 7-a-side County Cup Finals. Burton Joyce. 17th April 2018.

Eight teams from around the country came together at The Poplars in Burton Joyce for the County Cup Finals with Sacred Heart attending as Gedling's representatives. The schools were split into 2 groups with Sacred Heart placed with West Bridgford (Rushcliffe), Chuter Ede (Newark & District) and Peafield Lane (Mansfield). Games were played in two halves of 6 minutes each through the group.

In our opening game it was a tight affair against West Bridgford with both sides struggling slightly with the strong winds. The boys worked hard and continued to try throughout with the final score finishing 0-0. We moved into our second game against Peafield Lane knowing a win would keep us in the hunt to qualify through to the semi-finals. Halfway through the first half Dean pressed strongly as Peafield Lane attempted to play out, winning the ball and going through to open the scoring. The boys created other chances with Ryan, Sam and Dorian all causing problems. At the other end good blocks from Kyran W and Cameron kept things at 1-0 into half time. The second half started with the boys having to work hard to maintain their lead. Harvey making 3 excellent saves to keep the scores at 1-0. Both Kyran L and Seb had come on and gave fresh energy slotting in effortlessly to the side. As the game went on Sacred Heart grew stronger and we were rewarded with 2 further goals from Dorian to give us a 3-0 victory. This result had put us on top of the group above West Bridgford on goal difference. Having seen West Bridgford then beat Peafield Lane, Sacred Heart needed a win to top the group or a draw to finish runners-up and qualify for the semi-finals in the final game against Chuter Ede. Dorian settled any nerves early to put Sacred Heart 1-0 up, and early in the 2nd half he added a second goal to make it 2-0. However, Chuter Ede hadn't given up and a fine strike put them back in the game. With nearly the last kick of the game Chuter Ede managed to squeeze an equaliser in at the near post from a corner meaning the game finished 2-2 and we qualified for the semi-finals as runners-up.

The semi-final was against Nottingham High and played over 2 halves of 7 minutes. Sacred Heart started brightly and went 1-0 up within 3 minutes through Dorian. In a competitive game, physical game the boys stood strong and were unlucky to concede an equaliser on the stroke of half time. With the scores at 1-1 Sacred Heart continued to work hard and cause problems for Nottingham High with Dean's header going just over the closest we came to a winner with Harvey also again making an excellent save to keep us on level terms. The game finished 1-1 and

meant the match would be decided on penalty kicks. After the regulation 5 kicks the score was 3-3 meaning we entered sudden death penalties. Cruelly, on the 7th penalty Nottingham High emerged victorious 5-4.

The boys were a credit throughout and went out despite not losing a game throughout the tournament. It was a cruel end but the boys should be proud of their achievements and progress. This was an excellent effort and the boys came out with huge credit. A massive thank you also goes to all the parents who supported and helped with transport to Burton Joyce.