

Hockey—Hampstead and Hendon back in form

Late umpires put manager in a spot

Hampstead 3,
Tulse Hill 1

HAMPSTEAD swept away the depression of the last five weeks at Tivoli Road on Saturday with their first win in six London League games. But they did need some initial help from their manager Nick Coleman, who allowed his side's controversial opening goal to stand while deputising for a late umpire.

Keen to start on time and make full use of the short daylight available, both captains had agreed to let Coleman and Hampstead substitute Norman Borrett officiate until the umpires arrived. But it was nevertheless unfortunate, although perhaps inevitable, that a disputed decision should favour the home side.

After five minutes, Hampstead right midfielder Dave Dixon hammered a long corner cross into the Tulse Hill net at waist-height via the hand of the full-back on the line. Amid vigorous Tulse

Hill protests, Coleman awarded a goal he admits many umpires would probably have disallowed.

Explaining his decision, Coleman, who is a barrister and manager of England's Under-23 team, said: "We have had similar goals disallowed this season but I feel it is up to the umpire to interpret what is dangerous play and what is not.

"The international ruling states that any shot above knee high should be disallowed but this doesn't apply to club games. If you abide by that ruling, there seems no point in having a goal more than three foot high.

"Tulse Hill were upset and their skipper then asked me whether anything goes. I said yes. As it happened they equalised immediately which they might not have done if I hadn't awarded Hampstead's goal.

"One of their forwards, Gordon Nurse, who is a personal friend, told me afterwards that he thought I had made a bit of a strange decision."

As it happened, it took Nurse himself only two minutes to cancel out the dis-

puted goal with a clever shot over the advancing Arthur Soares, who had been brought into the Hampstead goal for his first senior game of the season.

Soon afterwards the appointed umpires turned up and, with the game at last in official hands, there was no denying Hampstead's clear superiority over a side still looking for their first league win of the season.

With Bill Taylor sparking the left wing to life, Hampstead fully deserved the brilliant goal with which left midfielder Richard Chapman restored their lead ten minutes before the interval.

Taking skipper Viji Vijendran's free hit from the Tulse Hill '25' on his reverse stick after making a perceptive blindside run into the inside left position, Chapman flicked the ball dextrously past the advancing goalkeeper in an action replay of the goal he scored against Oxford University the previous week.

By bringing on Borrett for centre forward Tony Fawley at the start of the second half, Hampstead added another team to an attack that looked sharper than in any previous game this season.

With the super-fit Borrett running his heart out to prove that he should have been in from the start after scoring against Oxford, and Geoff Smith repeatedly driving down the right wing, the South London side were kept at full-stretch.

Hampstead effectively clinched their first league win since November 4 13 minutes after half-time when centre-back Vijendran broke through from halfway to slip the ball to Dave Dixon, who pushed his shot past the hapless goalkeeper Tulse Hill had brought up from the second team.

Hampstead lost the initiative a little towards the end when they were indebted to Soares' ability to stop short corner shots. But to make amends for this lapse, they showed their unusual dedication by holding a fitness training session for ten minutes after the game had finished.

But, having at last found their strongest combination and moved up into tenth place, Hampstead were entitled to celebrate in any way they chose.

Hampstead can now enjoy a break from league combat in tomorrow's home friendly against the Bank of England.

● HAMPSTEAD second team suffered the exact reverse fate of the 1st XI at Tulse Hill on Saturday, losing 3-1 after a short corner shot from Hugh Smith had given them an early lead.

After equalising, the South London side stole the points with two brilliantly taken goals against the general run of play.