

Pav's rocket sinks Rubin

20 October 2011

Roman Pavlyuchenko's wonderful free-kick was enough as we toppled Rubin Kazan 1-0 in the Europa League on Thursday night.



The Russian striker put his compatriots to the sword in the 34th minute, rattling the ball into the top corner from 20 yards for his second goal in the competition.

But we were made to fight all the way for the victory by the tenacious side from Tartarstan.

Well-organised and neat in possession, Rubin Kazan got into some great positions, especially in the second half, but we defended stoutly and Heurlho Gomes was up to the task when called upon.

Harry Redknapp made nine changes to the team that drew 2-2 at Newcastle on Sunday.

Kyle Walker and Jake Livermore survived with Livermore switching to centre-half alongside Sebastien Bassong, skipper for the night.

Aaron Lennon, Sandro and Danny Rose all returned from injury and there was another chance for young Tom Carroll in midfield.

Pavlyuchenko signalled his intent inside two minutes when he rifled just wide from 30 yards as the teams traded chances in the first half.

Rubin Kazan had two chances in as many minutes as Navas glanced just wide from Natcho's corner and the Gomes made his first save of note, palming out Karadeniz's close-range header.

Defoe hammered a snapshot just wide after 20 minutes and after a somewhat quieter period, Pavlyuchenko struck in style.

Danny Rose was brought down on the edge of the box and Pavlyuchenko, no thrills, stepped up and blasted the ball home.

He wasn't finished for the half either, as Ryzhikov was forced into a fine save to touch away another shot from the left side of the box that took a slight deflection on the way.

The visitors enjoyed the greater share of possession in the second half.

Sandro inadvertently glanced a header backwards that Gomes had to flick away and the keeper was there again to palm out Ryazantsev's piledriver moments later. He also had a slice of luck as the ball just evaded Valdez following in.

Bassong, Livermore and Sandro all combined to block Kuzmin and then Noboa before Ryazantsev cut in from the left but hit a tame curler, easy for Gomes.

Lennon sparked into action on 72 minutes, beating Navas all ends up down the right and chipping up a cross for Defoe to attack. The striker powered his header inside the far post but Ryzhikov managed to claw the ball out.

Younes Kaboul and Luka Modric were introduced for Sandro and Lennon after 73 minutes.

Rubin continued to get into dangerous positions. Obafemi Martins, on just after the hour, had a sight at goal blocked by Walker and then met the corner, only to plant his header wide from close range.

Three minutes from time Noboa curled a free-kick that looked threatening for a moment, but Gomes dealt with comfortably.

We ended up on the front foot as Navas cut our Rose's cross destined for a Pavlyuchenko tap-in in injury time.

Spurs (4-4-2): Gomes; Walker, Bassong, Livermore, Rose; Lennon (Modric, 73), Carroll, Sandro (Kaboul, 73), Giovanni (Assou-Ekotto, 66); Defoe, Pavlyuchenko. Subs: Cudicini, Falque, Townsend, Kane.

Rubin Kazan (4-2-3-1): Ryzhikov; Bocchetti, Sharonov, Cesar, Kuzmin; Natcho, Noboa; Karadeniz, Ryazantsev (Eremenko, 79), Kasaevn (Martins, 61); Valdez. Subs: Arlauskis, Kaleshin, Kverkvelia, Orazsahedov.

Goals: Spurs - Pavlyuchenko (34).

Attendance: 24,058.

Referee: Mr J Sousa (Portugal).