

# Premier League National Champions 2008

Ipsley's Year 6 team won the Premier League National Schools U11 Tournament at the Madejski Stadium, Reading on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> May. The Year 6 boys represented Aston Villa in the tournament after having qualified through 3 previous tournaments to reach the finals.

They won Aston Villa's Redditch tournament and then Villa's Midland competition to earn the right to represent them. They qualified through to the finals with Tottenham Hotspur from their group at Pride Park, Derby.

The Finals were held on the main pitch at Reading and was a 6-a-side competition. Ipsley were the Villa representatives and had to play school teams which were representing Manchester Utd, Blackburn Rovers, Bolton Wanderers, Fulham, Reading, Spurs and Middlesbough. Even Premiership referees took charge of the matches played.



We got off to an excellent start with a 1-0 win over Reading thanks to a great strike from David Sharples. In the second game we struggled against Spurs's giant centre forward and went 2-0 down. David Sharples picked up a thigh injury and was unable to take any further part in the competition. He was replaced by Daniel Muckle who got straight into the action with a well worked goal. Unfortunately the final whistle soon blew and we lost 2-1.

In our third game we went 1-0 down to Middlesbrough after dominating most of the first half. The boys fought back and excellent goals from Connor Perry-Holmes and Brendon Bunn saw us come out on top 2-1.

They were now growing in confidence and Connor showed some brilliant skills as he but us 1-0 up against Man Utd. Daniel Muckle doubled our lead and United could not find any way past our solid defence.

They took Fulham apart in the first half with some outstanding football with goals from George Friel, Connor Perry-Holmes and Daniel Muckle. Despite some concerted pressure in the second half our defence again held them out and we ran out 3-0 winners.

We booked our place in the final with a 1-0 win over Blackburn thanks to a goal from George Friel. The defenders Brendon Bunn, Joe Hudson, Lewis Savage and keeper Jamie Peters were rock solid against a very strong Blackburn side who constantly pressed for a equaliser.

They took their foot off the gas knowing they were already through to the final and played out a goalless draw with Bolton Wanderers in their last group game.

Ipsley (Aston Villa) finished top with 16 points, Spurs and Blackburn were second with 14 points, but it was Blackburn who made it through to the final on goal different over Spurs.

## The Final – Aston Villa 3-1 Blackburn Rovers

We started brilliantly and dominated play with several close chances and Connor Perry-Holmes sent his shot crashing into the bar. We continued to press forward but got caught on the break and Blackburn went 1-0 up. We responded instantly as Brendon Bunn drove forward from defence and smashed a long range shot against the cross bar. Daniel Muckle pounced on the rebound and put us level. Half time 1-1.



We had several close chances in the second half but the Blackburn keeper was outstanding in goal. With 3 minutes to go Dan Muckle raced through and slotted the ball into the bottom right corner to give us the lead. George Friel then made it 3-1 as we pressed forward once more. Blackburn though didn't give up and threw everything at our boys. They hit the post and then Jamie Peters made a brilliant save as the nerves began to show from some. We just scrambled the resulting corner away and the final whistle blew. The Ipsley lads had went mad with excitement and joy as they had produced a remarkable achievement to become National U11 Champions of England.

They walked up the steps of the stadium to collect their medals and the winners trophy.

Ipsley Middle School (Aston Villa Team); Brendon Bunn (Capt., & defence), Jamie Peter (Keeper), Joe Hudson (Def), Lewis Savage (Def), George Friel (Midfield), Connor Perry-Holmes (Mid/Forward), Daniel Muckle (For), David Sharples (For).

They were all outstanding throughout and deserved their win. Since they have appeared on Sky TV, in the local newspaper and had a meeting with the Mayor of Redditch at the Town Hall. Congratulations on their outstanding achievement.