

**MOLTEN SPORTS
SPARTAN SOUTH MIDLANDS FOOTBALL LEAGUE**

NEWSLETTER No.18 (NEARLY CHRISTMAS EDITION)

By Bill Scholes

Saturday 13th December 2008

There was a severely truncated programme this week, due to the extremely inclement weather. Those games that were played all seemed to be in the north east of our region, where the freezing rain was perhaps not as incessant, but apart from the Royston v Kings Langley game, they all produced quite a few goals to reward the brave spectators who somehow managed to resist the lure of accompanying the good lady to the Woollies 50% off sales.

There were 3 brass monkey hat trick heroes, all in Division One and with two in one game. Neil Richardson of Sun Postal and Terry Lock of Arlesey Athletic both put the ball in the net three times in their 9 goal extravaganza, whilst Christian Lester only took four minutes to notch up his three for Cranfield United.

PREMIER DIVISION

Somewhat surprisingly, the only game to be played in this division was at **Hertford Town**, where the visitors were **Oxhey Jets** and where, although the conditions were not perfect, they did allow a game to be played, and also gave the 72 hardy spectators a welcome reason not to go Christmas shopping. In the 13th minute Lee Roberts crossed for Owen Beale to open the scoring for the home side, but the crowd had to wait until the last fifteen minutes before a brace from Attila Korsoveczki made sure of all three points.

DIVISION ONE

The top of the table clash between Royston **Town** and **Kings Langley** drew a crowd of 104 but ended in stalemate at 0-0. The game was an entertaining end to end match that unfortunately ended goalless although there were plenty of chances for both teams to secure the win. The result still leaves the Crows top of the table level with Kings Langley on 45 points but with two games in hand and a much better goal difference of +15. **Hatfield Town** missed the chance to close the gap on the two teams above them when they lost 4-2 away at **Cranfield United**. The home side got off to flying start as Christian Lester scored an excellent hat trick inside four minutes to put Utd three up with just twenty minutes on the clock. Hatfield fought their way back into the game and reduced the deficit to just a single goal before half time through Richard Cooke and Rhys Lawrence – the latter's goal coming with only 10 seconds remaining before Jaffa time. Hatfield pressed hard for the equaliser in the second half, but Cranfield held firm and increased their lead in the 75th minute when Stuart Reynolds netted from the penalty spot. Sadly only 13 spectators were on hand to witness the goal fest at **Arlesey Athletic** where visitors **Sun Postal Sports** eventually ran out 6-3 winners. Incredibly, 8 of the 9 goals came in the second half – perhaps the Jaffas should be tested – and included two hat tricks, one from each side. Terry Lock scored all three of Arlesey's goals, including a penalty, and Neil Richardson scored three for Sun. Also on target for the Posties were Lee Inch, who scored the sole first half goal, and Luke Sawyer and Ben Poulton. Mike O'Farrell put **New Bradwell St. Peter** into a first half lead in their game away at **Ampthill Town**, only for Will Scutt to equalise in the 65th minute. However two goals in the last twenty minutes, from Lee White and Lee Coulter, clinched the 3-1 win for the Peters.

DIVISION TWO

There was just the one game, played at **Bletchley Town**, where visitors **Caddington** triumphed 5-1 over the side currently propping up the table. Five of the visitor's goals were scored by Paddy Downs, Ray Massey, Courtney Massey, Bernie Christie and Mark Medlin. Jermaine Cuffy, from the penalty spot, scored Bletchley's sole reply.

HERTS INTERMEDIATE CUP

Hoddesdon Town Reserves finally got to play **Bedwell Rangers** in this re arranged tie, and won easily 7-0. The Rangers keeper was their hero, keeping the score down in single figures, whilst the Hoddesdon keeper, who got rather cold, managed to touch the ball twice!

MOLTEN SPORTS TEAM(S) OF THE MONTH – NOVEMBER

Congratulations to the following 3 teams who will shortly be presented with a brand new Molten Match Ball and an engraved commemorative plaque:

Premier Division: **Harefield United**

Division One: **Royston Town**

Division Two: **Bucks Student Union**

'TIS THE SEASON OF GOODWILL IN HATFIELD

In order to reward their loyal supporters who follow them home and away in all weathers, and in view of the current economic turndown, **Hatfield Town** have decided that their home game on Saturday 20th December against Arlesey Athletic will be free to all spectators. All are welcome for a really great festive game.

I'LL BE HOME FOR CHRISTMAS - OR SO THOUGHT MICK EWEN

Spare a thought for the League's Referees Secretary who left Royston Town at 6.20pm on Saturday on his way home, dreaming of a lovely warming curry, washed down with pints of beer and scotch and coke. However, due to an accident on the M11, the motorway was shut and Mr Ewen, who was on said motorway, was marooned in his car for several hours. He finally arrived home on Sunday at 12.25am! No beer, no whisky, no curry, no country blues or rock'n'roll on the radio, dying for a p and down to his last fag – not a happy bunny!

ARGENTINES USE "FREE KICK" SPRAY

Thanks to Referee Assessor Mike Coventry for the following article, and he has followed it up with his own personal take on the contents!

The Argentine Football Association is to introduce an aerosol spray to stop defenders creeping closer to the ball during a free-kick. From next year, referees will use the spray in First Division matches. Referees will mark a temporary white line at 9.15 metres (10 yards) from the ball, which defenders cannot cross. The spray will disappear 30 seconds later. Pablo Silva, who invented the spray, got the idea when he failed to score with a free-kick at an amateur match. "In the 88th minute we were losing 1-0 and won a free-kick on the edge of the area. When I took the kick, the wall was three metres away," he told Reuters (News Agency) earlier this year. "The referee didn't book anyone and didn't do anything," he said. "We lost the game and, driving home later with a mixture of anger and bitterness, I thought that we must invent something to stop this." The spray has been trialled in Second Division matches and a similar spray has been used in some competitions in Brazil.

MY KNAPSACK ON MY BACK

The *Argies' use 'free-kick' spray* article was recently e-mailed to this reporter by an old pal, a 'Spurs supporter, now working in New Zealand (and a good place for him!). An immediate reaction was that it had first seen the light of day some months earlier, say April, day one. It smacks of Urban Legend.

Whatever; one of the benefits of retirement is ample time to spare; so much more can be utilized in writing on this subject than its avid readership can possibly waste. Let us therefore begin with the sixth bullet point to p.76 of the current *Laws of the Game* – The whistle is NOT needed to restart play from a free kick. Also, everyone knows that when play is restarted at all direct free kicks, and most indirect free kicks, all opponents must be at least 10yds from the ball (and as this is not a quiz question, we shall ignore the metric equivalent). It is a cautionable offence not to respect this distance. Well everyone knows that too, Coventry, so get to the point.

The point is there is no need to point the whistle up the nearest attacker's nose, pace the 8yds many are initially willing to settle for, blow, and watch the rush commence. It's the blowing of the ACME Thunderer that precipitates the charge and no sprayed white line is going to change that. A nod's as good as a wink, they say. And better than a whistle in this situation argues Coventry.

So what about this sprayed line? How long is it supposed to be? Do you lengthen it as each new player joins the wall? What if it fades before play is restarted? Where is the referee looking whilst he's spraying? Who is responsible for supplying the spray? Is Law One to be amended to allow the temporary marking?

And how is the referee to carry this spray? Already burdened not just with responsibility, but also watches, pencils, notebook, microphone, batteries, monitors, etc., he/she will need a knapsack (or handbag). And, as this accessory will need to match the colour of the shirt; are they available in the luminous red the Swedish referee and the Chelsea goalkeeper wore in the same match?

Coventry has the answer. Go Commando. Camouflage it. Then no bugger can spot the man in the middle destroying the Ozone layer with that blasted spray!

SAVE BERKHAMSTED TOWN FC APPEAL

Berkhamsted Town Football Club is making a last-minute appeal to the local population and businesses to raise money to save the club. Having lost a court case to British Gas last week, **the club faces its electricity supply being cut off later today**. British Gas have rejected offers to pay by instalment, so the club needs to raise a five figure sum in the next couple of weeks to get power back and stay in business. Previous appeals for help have fallen on deaf ears, but a crisis point has now been reached, just before Christmas. If the community want to keep senior football in the town, now is the time for people to come forward with financial help and/or give their time to serve on the committee. There is precious little entertainment in the town and the loss of weekly football would be a blow to the supporters, who are mainly pensioners and children. The club has operated without a chairman for over a year since the departure of Guillermo Ganet, leaving the work to a diminishing band of keen but overworked helpers. Anyone can pledge money or help, by leaving their details with secretary Keith Hicks on 07767 430087 or on 01442 863216. All assistance will be gratefully received.

A public meeting is being held at the Broadwater clubhouse at 11am on Sunday 21st December. Everyone is invited to discuss the way forward. Fundraising events being planned include a celebrity football match and a sportsman's after dinner speaker.

Unless there is rapid progress, the game at Brimsdown Rovers on Saturday 20th could be the club's last in the Molten Spartan League Premier Division. The management and players are determined to fulfil that fixture. Future home games after Xmas depend on resolving the power crisis. The club also run reserve and youth teams, whose future is also in doubt

The club was formed as Berkhamsted Comrades by returning First World War servicemen in 1919. Over the years it has produced many fine players that have gone on to play in the Football League. Amongst those with long professional careers were in the 1930's Frank Broome (Aston Villa and England), Maurice Cook (one of Watford and Fulham's highest scorers of the 1950s) and Keith Ryan (Wycombe Wanderers captain in the 1990's). Highlights of the club's history include reaching the FA Vase final at Villa Park in 2001, winning the Herts. Senior Cup in 1953 and 2003, the Herts. Charity Cup in 2002 and the London Spartan League in 1980. The club has struggled on and off the field with increased travel since the FA moved it from the London based Isthmian League to the Birmingham based Southern League in 2004. The club were set to return to the Isthmian League in 2007 but were denied at the last moment when other clubs merged and another geographical reshuffle followed. This summer they were finally relegated after trying to compete for several years as an amateur club without any contract players in what is a semi-professional league. They are currently mid-table in the Molten Spartan League Premier Division, which has more sensible travel costs

All items of news, interest, tittle-tattle, etc. re your club, are very welcome.

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