

MOLTEN SPORTS
SPARTAN SOUTH MIDLANDS FOOTBALL LEAGUE

HAPPY NEW YEAR NEWSLETTER No. 20

By Bill Scholes

Saturday 27th December 2008

The festive spirit certainly seemed to be out in force over the week end – numerous Christmas puddings to be seen, both on and off the pitches, and bags of goals to warm even the most miserable scrooges. There were a total of 7 hat tricks, one in the Premier, three in Division One and three in Division Two. In the Premier, Jonathan Donoghue's hat trick for Kentish Town put an end to a miserable few weeks for his club, whilst in Div One, Denilson Vicente of Amersham Town, Dean Barker of London Colney and Dan Owen of Tokyngton Manor all rattled in three apiece. In Division Two, Simon Langley of Aston Clinton, Dominic Lawless of Padbury Utd and Lawrence Bunker of Pitstone & Ivinghoe were the guys on the money

PREMIER DIVISION

It's as you were at the top of the table going into the New Year, with no change in the top four placings despite the top three all losing. Leaders **Harefield United's** 15 match unbeaten run came to an end as they went down 3-2 away at **Oxhey Jets**, the winner coming in the last minute from Adam Lowton. Tim O'Mara got the Jets off to a flying start, but Adam Willis soon brought the Hares back on level terms. Jets went back in front early in the second half through Ian Bywater, but the league leaders struck back through Craig Totton who restored the equilibrium four minutes later. Harefield's chances of securing the win were damaged when they were reduced to 10 men and Lowton's late winner sent the crowd of over 100 home happy. However they still lead the table by 3 points and have two games in hand on second place **Langford** who also lost by 3-1 away at **Welwyn Garden City**. The Citizens belied their lowly league position as an early brace from Fabio Valenti put them into a two goal lead at half time, and although Joe Delaselle reduced the deficit after 58 minutes, a powerful strike from Johnny Moore clinched all three points for the home side, and a welcome tonic for stand in manager Richard Morton. **Biggleswade Town** suffered a Christmas hangover rather surprisingly going down 3-0 away at **St. Margaretsbury**, thereby losing the chance to close the gap on Harefield. In what was a rather attritional game, Kevin Cooper missed the chance to put the Waders in front from the penalty spot in the first half, and the Bury took the lead through John Barker after 63 minutes. The visitor's chances of saving at least a point appeared to disappear when Ryan Redford was dismissed for alleged use of the elbow and two late goals from Martin Strickland and Ed Taylor completed a miserable day for the Waders. Some consolation is that they remain in third place, albeit on goal difference, just ahead of **Kingsbury London Tigers** who were the only side in the top four who managed to obtain a point as they drew 2-2 away at **Tring Athletic**. The home side got off to a dream start scoring after just 3 minutes through Danny Gray who was left alone at the far post to fire low and hard into the net. Just 2 minutes later Tigers should have equalised when Marco Tagbajumi beat a square looking Athletic defence, but his shot narrowly went wide of the post as keeper Dave Clark closed him down. Tigers' Edson Cato was proving a handful up front finding a lot of space but it was Franklin Manuel who scrambled the ball home for a deserved equaliser. However Tring were back in front within three minutes when Andy Mullins headed home.

Tigers started to lose their cool and a few minutes after receiving a yellow card for a late tackle from behind, Tarik Ellekhlifi repeated the offence, received the same punishment, and departed the field of play. Athletic seemed in total control in the early stages of the second half, but chance after chance went begging and the ten men began to believe that it was not all over, and although Cata missed two seemingly simple headers, he proved more adroit with his feet as he produced a tremendous chip over Clark to level the scores. Tring continued to press forward but just could not make their numerical advantage pay. **Hanwell Town** moved up two places to 6th following their excellent 5-1 win at home game to **Colney Heath**, who drop back two places as a consequence. Rehash Ausacsiezarek (please don't let him score again, Bob!) put Town in front after 20 minutes and Chris Mills extended the lead shortly afterwards. Heath were back in the game shortly afterwards when Alan Clarke netted, but Mills (his second), Jason Tucker and Anthony Rowlands added three more in the second half to complete the Christmas stuffing. **Kentish Town** bounced back from their own mid week 10-1 stuffing at the hands of Chalfont St. Peter to run out 4-3 winners over troubled **Berkhamsted Town**. The Christmas theme continued as parts of the pitch were disguised as a Xmas pudding, but an exciting end to end game ensued. Town's hero was Jonathan Donoghue who scored a hat trick – his third being the decisive winner. David Dawson was also on target for the home side, whilst Berko's goals came from Ryan Blake (2) and teenager Gianni Marotta. **Broxbourne Borough** suffered a heavy 5-0 defeat at the hands of **Chalfont St. Peter** earlier in the season, and must have feared the worst, particularly after the Saints ten goal salvo in midweek, but must have been pleased to emerge with a 2-2 draw in the return fixture. From the Saints point of view this was disappointing as they led twice and controlled large parts of the game. Chalfont had the ideal start when a John Carroll free kick was headed in by Charlie Strutton in the eighth minute but could not build on this, and the Boro missed a few good chances before equalizing with an OG by Jerome Okimo, who headed a corner into his own net. Robert Tungatt almost gave Broxbourne the lead just before half time, but his header went over the bar. The Saints were back in front within two minutes of the restart when Adam Louth converted a cross from the right. But again they failed to build on their lead and they were made to pay seventeen minutes from time when Nicky Marsh ran on to a through ball and slot past keeper Mark Oliver. **Hertford Town** produced their third win in a row as they celebrated in front of a goodly crowd of 114 with a 3-0 win over visitors **Biggleswade United**. Attila Korsoveczki opened the scoring for the Blues on the half hour mark, rounding the keeper to slot into the empty net, and Dave Hunt made it two with a cracking shot from the edge of the box just before brandy time. The chap who scored the first goal also got the third curling a shot into the top corner after 67 minutes. The relegation battle between **Cockfosters** and **Brimdsdown Rovers** turned out to be a feisty local derby, with the added attraction of ex Cockfosters striker Ben Andreos returning for the first time with his new club. You can guess the outcome – yes, he scored the winning goal with three minutes left! Jon Moniatis put the home side in front after just 11 minutes, a lead they held onto until right on the stroke of half time when Adam Moss equalised for the visitors. Moniatis scored his second on the hour to put Cockfosters back in front only for Charlie Moxon to level it up again with a stunning strike. All 22 players produced their handbags for a cameo interlude, but the stage was set for Andreos to become the hero, and villain of the piece (depending upon which side you are on!). The three points gained by Brimdsdown has put light between themselves and the bottom two as **Holmer Green** failed to improve on their points total following their 2-0 defeat at home to **Aylesbury Vale**. The Greens have now failed to score in the last 310 minutes of football, and two goals in quick succession, from Luke Melisi and Stuart Corbould, before twenty minutes were up, effectively sealed their fate, and a late sending off for Ben Sturgess only added to their woes.

DIVISION ONE

Royston Town finished 2008 on a high by stretching their unbeaten run in the League to 14 games in front of their biggest crowd (132) of the season – lured no doubt by promises of Sexy Santas – as they defeated **Crawley Green** 2-0. Craig Hammond put the hosts ahead on 31 minutes when the ball was rolled back to him from an indirect free kick on the edge of the area and he buried the ball in the top corner giving the keeper absolutely no chance. In the 70th minute a similar situation occurred again with another indirect free kick on the edge of the area, but this time the ball was rolled back to Ryan Lockett who struck the ball low and under the wall into the bottom corner. The Crows are now three points clear at the top of the table - this was their 6th clean sheet in their last eight league games, and with an average age of just 20 years old, they can look forward to 2009 with anticipation. **Kings Langley** consolidated their second place position with a 3-1 home win over **Stony Stratford Town**. All the goals came in the second half – Allan Arthur getting the ball rolling for Kings with a brace in the 48th and 65th minutes. Stony reduced the deficit through Matt Fraser ten minutes later, but Richard Harvey restored the two goal cushion, and settled the home sides nerves, shortly afterwards. On a bright but very cold day, **New Bradwell St. Peter** entertained third placed **Hatfield Town** at the Recreation Ground and won an entertaining if a hard fought match. Hatfield were quick out the blocks and on just 3 minutes saw an effort cleared off the Peter's goal line. It was all Hatfield and they really should have scored but the ball was blazed over the bar from close range. After another good chance went begging, Peters began to get into the match and they went ahead against the run of play on 24 minutes when a left wing cross was turned into his own net by Town's Trevor Golder under pressure from Greg Tite. Hatfield had a last minute chance of the first half from a free kick on the edge of the Peter's box, but the shot was blocked and the keeper saved the follow up. The second half saw the home team begin to dominate the early play and Michael O'Farrell missed a great chance to score on 55 minutes. But Peters went further ahead on 65 minutes when Adam Castagnetti headed home a deflected cross. Hatfield still looked dangerous and they scored on 69 minutes when Martin Standen rifled home a shot from a long ball out of his own defence. Hatfield deservedly equalised on 76 minutes when Lewis Owen cracked in a shot from the left wing. It looked like Hatfield would go on and win the match, but Peters had other ideas and as Town pushed up for the winner they were caught napping at the back. A seemingly harmless free kick way out on the right wing from Dan O'Farrell eluded everyone and hit the underside of the Town bar and bounced into the net on 84 minutes. Peters were through again on goal shortly afterwards but the Town keeper saved from Martin Wells. However with Hatfield now pushing up in search of the equaliser, Castagnetti broke clear to score his second and Bradwell's fourth right on 90 minutes. **Bedford Town Reserves** took advantage of Hatfield's slip up to move above them on goal difference, thanks to a six goal demolition of **Sun Postal Sports** – for whom the big yellow thing in the sky was definitely not shining. Playing at home, Town Reserves were always in control and although they only led two nil at half time (Nathaniel Peacock and Stacey Field), a four goal flurry, from Ashley Deveraux (twice), Michael Chang and Peacock (his second) came in the last 12 minutes. Sixth placed **London Colney** were another side to get in the Christmas spirit as they administered an eight goal stuffing to bottom club **Brache Sparta**. Six of the goals came in the first half, so things did improve slightly for the Luton based side. On the scoresheet for Colney was Dean Barker, with a hat trick, Gary Simmonds, with a brace, and Sam Mitchell, Dave Corran and Russell Gallagher. A festive crowd of 5 travelled to the Western Avenue ground of **Tokington Manor** to see the home side defeat their neighbours from a mile or so up the road **Sport London e Benfica** 4-2. Dan Owen not only got a Xmas hat trick, but certainly scored the quickest goal of the day, finding the net in just 21 seconds. The accuracy of the

timing would have been of immense pleasure to Mr Bean, although one hopes he does not insist on asking for minutes **and** seconds for all goals in future! SLB hit back quickly after the early setback, Dani Da Conceicao equalising after three minutes and Bruno Marques giving them the lead on 20 minutes, but the Manor hit back in the second half with two more from Owen and a late goal from Jesse Reynolds. **Winslow United** returned from their cross country trip to **Amphill Town** with 3-2 win under their belts, thanks to a goal five minutes from time from Steve Garbutt. Winslow took an early lead through Phil Martin, but this was cancelled out by James Ingham, and a Paul Munday penalty on 70 minutes seemed to put Amphill in the driving seat, but Ian Trott's equaliser 8 minutes later paved the way for Garbutt's winner. **Amersham Town** moved up a place, over **Hoddesdon Town**, as they came back from **Harpenden Town** with a 4-1 win, thanks to a hat trick from Denilson Vicente and a singleton from Toby Grimes. The home side's sole reply came from Chris Gregory. **Arlesey Athletic** slid to 2-1 defeat at home to **Bedford** who took the lead through Andy Golding, only for Bill Sells to pull Athletic level three minutes later. The winning goal, from Travis Joseph, came in the second half. **Buckingham Athletic** remain in the bottom two following their narrow 1-0 defeat away at mid table **Cranfield United**, for whom Christian Lester was on target in the 70th minute.

DIVISION TWO

New leaders going into 2009 as **AFC Dunstable** return to the top of the table for the first time since the end of August following their 2-0 win at home to **Bletchley Town**. Admittedly it is only on goal difference, and just the one goal at that, but nonetheless something to make the New Year celebrations that much sweeter. Dunstable's hero with both goals was Michael Laws. Previous leaders **Hadley** were without a game and drop back to third. **The 61FC** move back up to second place after their 4-0 home win against **Bucks Student Union**, who perhaps have spent the festive season celebrating as only students can. Jamie Irons and Ryan Smith put the Luton side two up at half time, and Alex Bennett and Chris Mapp added another two in the second half. **Wodson Park** made the long journey across to **Risborough Rangers**, but it must have seemed quicker on the way back following their 5-2 victory. Daniel Burke and Sam Leader for Wodson and two from Robbie Morgan ensured that it was 2-2 at half time, but Wodson proved the stronger in the second half running in three more goals, including a brace from Tyler Hatherly and one from Jack Friend. What a difference a year makes – this time one year ago **Markyate** were rock bottom, had not won a game, had one point, and a goal difference of -58. Today they sit proudly in 5th place, having won ten games and amassed 31 points – their latest win being 3-0 away at **Old Bradwell United**. Two late goals from Chris Harvey and Niall Lynch sealed the win whilst their opening goal came from Rohan Deroses, who is now the 7th leading goalscorer in Division Two. What odds would you have given on that a year ago? There was a real goalfest at **Caddington** where the home side went down by the odd goal in nine to visitors **Aston Clinton**. It was two all at half time, Chris Hemmings and Bernie Christie scoring for Caddington and Simon Langley and Paul White replying for Aston Clinton, but in the second half Langley went on to complete his hat trick and lead the visitors to victory. Ryan Caterer was also on target for Clinton, whilst Ray Massey and Tony Scurry doubled Caddington's total. **Pitstone & Ivinghoe** emerged triumphant from their local derby with **Tring Corinthians** with an emphatic 5-0 home win. Mitch Hamilton and Lawrence Bunker put Pitstone into an early two goal lead and Kevin Temple added to it just after the break, before Bunker went on to complete his hat trick. **Mursley Utd** moved up a couple of places into the top half of the table with a 2-1 win away at **Totternhoe**. Ed Mills put Mursley in front early on, and although Gary Capehorn equalised for Totternhoe, Steve Mooney scored what turned out to be the winner just before the half time break.

LEADING GOALSCORERS IN SSMFL COMPETITIONS (Up to 31st December)

Premier Division: Blaise O'Brien of Hanwell Town leads the way with 19 goals, just two ahead of Richie Howard (Colney Heath) and Charlie Strutton from Chalfont St. Peter, who has blasted his way into the top three with 10 goals in his last 3 matches. Robert Groves (Langford) has 16, whilst Edson Cata (KL Tigers) and Ryan Wade (Broxbourne Boro) are both on 15.

Division One: Last years runner up, Craig Hammond (Royston Town) looks determined to go one better this season, and with 23 goals is four ahead of his nearest rival Chris Hill of Winslow Utd. Just one behind on 18 goals is Emeka Nwamadi of Hoddesdon. Robbie O'Dell from Crawley Green is on 17, whilst Dan Owen (Tokyngton Manor) and Dan Walker (Stony Stratford) both have 16.

Division Two: Locked together at the top with 23 goals apiece are Danny Guar of Hadley and last year's runner up Lawrence Bunker of Pitstone & Ivinghoe. Two goals behind them on 21 is Daddy Moses from Bucks Student Union, with Felix Kyeremeh (AFC Dunstable) another two back. There is then a five goal gap back to Richard Shittu of Tring Corinthians (14) and Hayden Wills (The 61 FC) and Rohan Deroses of Markyate both have 13.

MID SEASON ATTENDANCES – LEAGUE GAMES ONLY

Royston Town not only head the Division One table, they are also out in front of the Average attendances table, being the only club in the League currently recording over 100 - actually 104. The top three attendances in the **Premier Division** are recorded by Biggleswade Town (92), Hertford Town (83) and Harefield Utd (76), but there are four other **Division One** clubs (Hoddesdon, New Bradwell, Hatfield and Kings Langley) with higher average attendances than more than half of the Premier clubs. In **Division Two**, both AFC Dunstable and Wodson Park are attracting more spectators than 6 Premier clubs!

GROUND GRADING REQUIREMENTS

I'm sure everyone is very well aware of the current FA requirements / timetables for achieving Grades F and G, but just in case there is any confusion, this is the latest situation from the F.A.

Premier Division: All clubs in the Premier Division MUST have achieved a Grade F by the 31st March 2009 if they wish to remain at Step 5 level. Clubs not achieving this level will be reassigned to Division One.

Division One: The F.A. have now given all clubs at Step 6 level a year's grace in order to achieve Grade G i.e. the grade must now be achieved by March 2010. However, those clubs wishing to be eligible for promotion to the Premier Division must have their grounds up to Grade F standard by 31st March 2009.

BERKHAMSTED TOWN FOOTBALL CLUB

(Taken from the Club website)

A second well attended public meeting was held at the Town Hall on Monday 29th December to discuss the way ahead for the financially troubled club, whose clubhouse and ground is currently closed, as the electricity supply was cut off earlier this month (December). Some money has been pledged to keep the existing club going but it is dwarfed by the size of claims from creditors. The club is still looking for potential saviours in the town (individuals or sponsoring businesses). To date offers have been insufficient, but more may emerge after the Christmas break. **Offers of help (time or money) can still be made to Keith Hicks on 07767 430087.** Unless sufficient finance is found in the next two weeks to restore power to the club, the existing club will have to withdraw its first team from the Premier Division of the Molten Spartan South Midland-s League and its reserves from the Suburban League. The club will be

honouring its fixture at Cow Lane against Tring Athletic this Saturday, 3rd January k.o.3pm. The club is appealing for a bumper turnout for the match to boost morale and its survival prospects. It may be the last chance to see the current club play locally; so many former players are likely to attend. All options are being considered. In case finance is not found, Secretary Keith Hicks has arranged for the local newspaper to carry notice of an Extraordinary General Meeting of club members at 8pm on Monday 12th January 2009 in Berkhamsted Town Hall in the High Street to consider a resolution to wind up the club.

The Broadwater stadium is owned by Berkhamsted Sports Ground Charitable Association Limited. Jan Cowper told the meeting that the Association remains supportive of continuing football in the town at Broadwater. The ground is graded for step 4 football, which is the level that the current club competed at until it was relegated to Step 5 in the summer. Should the club be wound up, a brand new club would probably have to start at an even lower level. However, the FA is imposing new tougher ground grading rules in the summer. Many clubs that are currently at Step 5 do not have facilities of the required standard, so there may be vacancies for clubs at Step 5, or other clubs may be looking to relocate to Broadwater. **Ben Terry**, a supporter, is investigating setting up a new club that might operate as early as next season. Those who wish to support that venture can contact him on **07779 352562**.

THE IDEAL XMAS PRESENT...NOT!

Mick Ewen was in trouble. He had forgotten to buy a Xmas present for his wife, who was not best pleased. She told him "By the weekend I expect to find a gift in the driveway that goes from 0 to 200 in under 10 seconds AND IT HAD BETTER BE THERE." The next morning Mick got up early and rushed out of the house. When his wife woke up, she looked out of the window and sure enough there was a small gift-wrapped box in the middle of the driveway. Confused, she put on her robe and ran out to the drive and picked up the box. She opened it and found a set of brand new bathroom scales. The Funeral Service for Mick has been scheduled for next week.

Sorry Mick, but you were spotted pushing a buggy around Morrisons just before Christmas – never had you down as a New Man.....street cred right out the window!

AND FINALLY.....SADLY, BUT ALSO WITH PLEASURE

By Club HonSec Charles Bassano

Buckingham Athletic FC wish to publicly express their gratitude to the **Management & Players of Cranfield United FC & the Match Officials on Saturday 27th December** for their superb support & respect shown during the tribute to our member Ted O'Dell who sadly passed away on Christmas Day after a long illness. Ted's son Dean is our goalkeeper and his two nephews, David (Captain) & Mark were also playing. Cranfield Officials also reduced the admission prices to £3.00 per car and this gesture was also greatly appreciated by all the family & friends from Buckingham who attended the game. It's a shame that their hospitality & cooperation didn't stretch to letting us win the game! **Thank you to everyone involved.**

All that remains is for me to wish you all

A VERY HAPPY AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR

Enjoy the celebrations, but please do so responsibly - if you don't, there is a certain well known Scouser who can probably tell you what's on the breakfast menu in the local nick!

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

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