

**MOLTEN SPORTS**  
**SPARTAN SOUTH MIDLANDS FOOTBALL LEAGUE**

**NEWSLETTER No. 21**

**By Bill Scholes**

**Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2009**

**I'm afraid an early visit from Jack Frost severely curtailed the number of fixtures planned to see the New Year off to a flying start, with just 13 out of 29 taking place. Given the conditions, it was hardly surprising that there was only one 0-0 draw, and not a hat trick in sight.**

**PREMIER DIVISION**

**Harefield United's** home game against **Cockfosters** was one of only four games completed, and their 5-0 victory enabled them to go five points clear at the top, and with games in hand over the chasing pack. Relegation threatened Cockfosters battled well in the first half to keep the game scoreless, but once Adam Willis opened the scoring in the 49<sup>th</sup> minute it became one-way-traffic. Further goals came from Craig Totton, Willis again, and two very late strikes from Luke Willis and Danny Buckle. Second placed **Langford** dropped two points as they battled out a 0-0 draw at home to **Oxhey Jets** – the point gained by the Jets enabling them to move up to third place, their highest since achieving Premier status. One of the other games to take place was just up the road at **Biggleswade Town**, who must have wished that it didn't as they lost for the second week running, this time 2-1 to **Broxbourne Borough**. The Waders found themselves 1-0 up at the break thanks to a well taken Ryan Redford goal in the 43rd minute after being put through by Kevin Cooper but canny substitutions from Broxbourne saw the visitors gain a firm hold on proceedings in the second period with Oni Thomas grabbing a brace within 2 minutes either side of the hour mark. This win enabled the Boro to leapfrog over their hosts and reach the giddy heights of fourth. The other completed game was at **St. Margaretsbury** where the home side beat **Biggleswade United** 3-1, thanks to goals from Ed Taylor, John Barker and Scott McGuiness. Luke Lincoln came up with Biggleswade's sole reply. A huge crowd of 224 turned up at the Grass Roots Stadium to see the local derby between **Tring Athletic** and **Berkhamsted Town** - the crowd being swollen by the fact that this could possibly have been the visitors' last game due to their financial problems. They did at least see 51 minutes of play, although no goals ensued before the referee abandoned the game due to the deteriorating state of the pitch.

**DIVISION ONE**

Despite not playing, Royston Town's lead at the top remains at three points as their nearest challengers **Kings Langley** lost, for the second time in three games, 3-0 away at third placed **Bedford Town Reserves**. On the mark for Town Reserves were Andy Phillips, with a brace, and Steve Gentle. There was obviously a pocket of warm air hovering around the New Eyrie as next door neighbours **Bedford** also played, and they enjoyed a 3-3 draw with visitors **Sun Postal Sports**. Clearly a game of two halves, the first belonged to Bedford who went into a three goal lead thanks to Travis Joseph, Ricky Lawrence, and Phil Fisher, but the Posties bounced back in the second half to grab a share of the points with goals from Lee Inch, Ben Poulton and Matt Collins. A goodly crowd of 81 at **London Colney**, swollen somewhat by frozen off local luminaries who refused to go shopping, were rewarded with an entertaining game of football, both sides, generally, sensibly playing their part in the difficult conditions. Visitors **Crawley Green** must have wondered how they arrived at half time trailing by 2-1 as they had several chances to open their account but their finishing was somewhat wayward. Both Colney's goals were of the somewhat belated Christmas gift variety – poor defending allowing Jack Rowley to rifle home after 8 minutes and after Gary Simmons corner was not effectively cleared, Dave Corran was on hand to stab home. Simmons' passing brought a touch of quality to a sometimes frenetic game, whilst Colney's Josh Humbert generally dealt well, and mostly legally, with Crawley's front two. Crawley hot shot Robbie O'Dell finally found the net just before half time when he rifled home a knock down from a throw in to

bring Crawley back in contention, but it was Conley who came the nearest to increasing their lead, although Dean Barker narrowly managed to miss my car, (parked 100 yards behind the goal!) when he scooped his shot from the penalty mark well over the bar. **Sport London e Benfica** remains in trouble near the foot of the table as they lost their 7<sup>th</sup> game on the bounce, going down 3-1 at home to **Amptill Town**. John Veitch, and a brace from Lee Hayward, put the visitors three up at half time, and although SLB rallied briefly through Dani Da Conceicao, the hoped for comeback did not materialise.

**DIVISION TWO**

The potential match of the day in this division was between Hadley and The 61 FC, but Jack Frost put paid to that, thus allowing AFC Dunstable, who beat **Markyate** 4-1 away, to open up a three point gap at the top of the table. Two goals in each half – Michael Law and Felix Kyeremeh in the first and Ross Morrison and Gareth Seeley in the second- secured the victory, with Rohan Deroses responsible for the home side's sole reply. **Wodson Park** remain in close contention in fourth place following their 2-0 home win over **Padbury United**- the goals coming from Harminder Tumber and Tyler Hatherly, whilst **Mursley United's** 2-0 home win (goals from Jakub Kasprzyk and Adam Caesar) over **Caddington** enabled them to leapfrog over their visitors and move up to 6<sup>th</sup> place. The other two games to take place both involved the bottom three clubs – bottom club **Bletchley Town** gained another point in their 1-1 draw away at **Kent Athletic**, but still seek that elusive first league victory – a Luke Williamson penalty gave Bletchley a first half lead but they were denied the win when a goal from Lee Scott brought the scores level. In the clash of second from bottom versus third from bottom, **Totternhoe** emerged with all three points against **Old Bradwell United**, and in so doing closed the gap to one point, whilst at the same time increasing the gap with Bletchley to five points. On the mark for Totternhoe were James McCarthy, Stefan Tracey, and Henry Mungwira, whilst Anthony Perry replied for Old Bradwell Utd.

**GROUND GRADING – AN AMENDMENT**

Sincere apologies to any Chairmen of Division One clubs who may have been admitted to hospital with chest pains following the article on Ground Grading in last week's Newsletter. The point in the last paragraph on clubs looking for promotion from Division One to the Premier having to achieve Grade F by 31 March 2009 was not correct. **Clubs hoping for promotion from Division One to the Premier Division and from Division Two to Division One, are now given until 31 March in the year following to achieve the appropriate grade.** This was changed at the end of last season by the FA and was introduced because the FSIF would not fund improvement to facilities for a higher level unless clubs were promoted. From Div Two to Div One, the funding increases from a maximum of £10k up to £100k. To be considered for promotion clubs must have Planning Consent for the improvements necessary, funding application submitted subject to promotion, timetable for the work to be carried out and a business plan showing how the balance of the money has been or will be raised to cover the balance of the cost.

**IT MATTERS MORE IF THERE'S MONEY ON IT!**

Important news for all you betting fans out there. Skybet are now offering odds on the last 32 of the FA Vase. Chalfont St. Peter is at 25 to 1 and Biggleswade Town are at 33 to 1. I know Chalfont's Press Secretary, Nick Simon, has already had a few pence on the Saints, and I wouldn't be at all surprised if Chairman Denis wasn't thinking about taking his wallet out. I suppose it could help to pay for the plane! I'm sure there will also be an equal amount of activity up in the Bedford / Cambridgeshire areas, although I guess Chairman Maurice will probably tell you he hasn't got any money left!

Let's hope that the weather relents in time for a full fixture list this Saturday, although the forecast doesn't look too promising. Perhaps underground heating should be included in all future Grade F requirements?

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