

**MOLTEN SPORTS  
SPARTAN SOUTH MIDLANDS FOOTBALL LEAGUE**

**NEWSLETTER No. 22  
By Bill Scholes**

**Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2009**

The only winner on Saturday was Jack Frost who, having warmed up (although not literally) the previous week, completed a clean sweep by managing to get ALL games in the league postponed. Given that Sunday night was the first frost free night for nearly three weeks, I suppose it wasn't all that surprising, but it does of course increase the work load of our two fixture secretaries – Phil Rolt and Eric (no more than 16) Harrison. As I write this, it's definitely warmer, and definitely wetter, so it looks like we will get some footie in this week. At least the grounds will have had a rest!

The biggest breaking news of the week off the pitch has been the winding up of Berkhamsted Town F.C. following their EGM on Monday night, and our sympathies go out to all those who have been involved in the recent battles to keep the club alive. More news to follow.....

**PREMIER DIVISION**

Going into 2009, Harefield United lead the table by 5 points, have at least a couple of games in hand on their nearest challengers and, in the view of most neutrals, have been the best side during the first half of the season. They would probably have still been in the FA Vase, but for coming up against Lowestoft Town – last years runners up and one of the stronger teams left in the competition – in the last round. The Hares have applied for promotion, should they finish top, they have the relevant ground grading, and it is beginning to look as though they will achieve their aim of climbing back up the Pyramid. However, there's many a slip twixt cup and lip, and should they perchance slip up, there's a whole gaggle of clubs waiting to pounce. Its been a fairly open season so far, and its good to see some of the perhaps less fancied names – Oxhey Jets, Broxbourne Boro, Colney Heath, Kingsbury London Tigers - featuring in the top echelons. Watch out for Chalfont St. Peter and Aylesbury Vale, who have both been distracted by cup runs, but a strong performance in 2009 could put them right up there in the top four., It's a bit surprising to see Brimsdown Rovers, who were challenging for promotion last season, down in the bottom four, whilst the three below them (Haringey Boro, Cockfosters and Holmer Green) all need to put together good winning streaks if they are to avoid finishing in the bottom two.

It's a bit too early yet to work out the effect of Berkhamsted's withdrawal from the league, but undoubtedly it will have a knock on effect on the league table – so watch this space.

**DIVISION ONE**

It would take a brave man to bet against Royston Town for the league title – they are three points clear and have three games in hand over their nearest rivals Kings Langley. However, the second half of the season will undoubtedly see a number of clubs in the top ten pushing for as a high a finishing position as possible, given the dangling carrot of possible promotion to the Premier Division – assuming of course that their grounds pass muster. At the foot of the table, Buckingham Athletic and Brache Sparta are beginning to lose touch with the clubs above them.

**DIVISION TWO**

Because of the disparity in the number of games played so far (through no fault of Eric's!) it is difficult to pick out winners and losers with any real certainty, but there is certainly daylight – at least eleven points -between the top four and the rest. Although AFC Dunstable is top, they have played 4 games more than The 61 FC, who look a good bet for the top spot. However, two of the league's newcomers, Hadley and Wodson Park are both hovering ominously close and will

undoubtedly be involved in the end of season shake down. Of the other “new” clubs, Bucks Student Union have overcome early teething problems and are safely ensconced in mid table and have ambitious plans for the future, but the news of the two MK based clubs has not been so good – MK Wanderers resigned in November whilst Bletchley Town remain the only club in the whole of the SSMFL without a win to their name.

**MOLTEN SPORTS TEAMS OF THE MONTH – DECEMBER**

Congratulations to the following three teams who have been declared Team of the Month for their respective Divisions. Presentations of a Molten Match Ball and suitably engraved plaque are currently being arranged.

Premier Division: Chalfont St. Peter  
Division One: Hoddesdon Town  
Division Two: Padbury United

**THE SAD DEMISE OF BERKHAMSTED TOWN FC**

On Monday 12<sup>th</sup> January at an EGM of members of Berkhamsted Town FC at the Town Hall, it was resolved to wind up the club. Sadly all attempts to save the club have failed. Since December 16, The Lilywhites have been unable to play home games - a failure to pay an £11,500 bill saw British Gas cut off the power at their Broadwater Ground, rendering it unfit for use in the Molten Spartan South Midland Premier Division. It has since been revealed that the club's debts amount to substantially more. It had been hoped that the club would be able to continue until the end of the season - playing all their games away from home or ground-sharing - but neither were really realistic options. It is expected that the club's record will be expunged from the Premier Division tables.

**NEW GROUNDSHARE AGREEMENT**

Broxbourne Borough have confirmed a ground sharing agreement with Essex Senior League side Enfield 1893 which will come into effect for the 2009/10 campaign. Broxbourne chairman Peter Harris alongside his Enfield counterpart Steve Whittington both heralded the news as a major step forward and one which would go a long way to determine long-term objectives and progression for the respective Step 5 clubs. The Goffs Lane venue will be in a position for pooled resources towards a more meaningful and sustained future. Both clubs are forward-thinking and innovative and share the same values, confirmed after a series of consultation meetings that extolled the virtues of singing from the same song-sheet. An added plus is the not inconsiderable bonus of having one of the best playing surfaces in the immediate vicinity for both clubs to ply their trade. Despite a large catchment area, Boro have not been able to attract the necessary support base through the turnstiles, whilst Enfield 1893 hankered for a return nearer to the club's original roots in the Borough of Enfield. And, with the Goffs Lane club holding an EN postcode in its address, this suited both parties, although just a little fine-tuning remains on the statute book towards a long-term agreement. For the next campaign, however, it is a done deal. Enfield are presently tenants at Ryman Division One North club Ware, but this agreement runs out at the end of the 2008/09 season.

**FA VASE**

Finally it just remains for me to wish all the very best of luck to our two remaining clubs left in the FA Vase this weekend. Biggleswade Town have been blessed with a home tie against Croydon from the Kent Senior League, whilst Chalfont St. Peter has to make the long journey up to Gateshead to play Dunston Federation of the Northern League. If you are in the vicinity of either of these two games, do pop in and lend your support.

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

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