

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

**NEWSLETTER No. 27**  
*By Bill Scholes*

**Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> February 2009**

**Hearty congratulations to BIGGLESWADE TOWN and CHALFONT ST. PETER who both enjoyed excellent victories in the 5<sup>th</sup> Round, and now gives the Spartan South Midland Football League 2 sides in the last 8 of the Competition. Both clubs are to be congratulated, not only on their performance on the field, but also on the vast amount of work both clubs had to do in the run up to the games , in order to make sure that they could take place. With the amount of, firstly snow, and secondly water, that had to be removed, it was no wonder that neither pitch was the prettiest in the world, but they got the job done, and full marks to all concerned. As always, however, cup success brings its own problems. Both Biggleswade and Chalfont have now played 5 games less than the leading four clubs, and should they , hopefully, both qualify for the Semi Finals of the Vase, they will lose another two Saturdays – the Semi Finals being two legged affairs played on a home and away basis!**

Elsewhere in the League, the weather again had the upper hand – the problem this time generally being the amount of water remaining after the snows melted – and only 7 of the scheduled 25 league games could take place. Both Messrs Rolt and Harrison are already scheduling visits to their local hair transplant salons.

*No hat trick heroes emerged from the mud this Saturday*

**F.A. Carlsberg VASE – 5<sup>th</sup> ROUND**

A crowd of over 700 watched **Biggleswade Town** despatch visitors **Market Drayton Town** to progress into the quarter finals of the FA Vase. Market Drayton started the better and the Waders had to defend the opening ten minutes or so. However, the first chance fell to Biggleswade but Jack Weeden fluffed his shot when in front of goal on 13 minutes. With the match finely balanced, Weeden made amends on 20 minutes when he headed home a deep right wing cross to but the Waders ahead. Drayton always looked dangerous and they wasted a good opportunity on 23 minutes following a deflection which the forward put wide. But Drayton gained a deserved equaliser on 35 minutes when Paul McMullen was left free to head a corner kick into the Waders net. Just when it looked like that the teams would end the half all square, a mistake in the Drayton defence allowed Kevin Cooper to win the ball and cross for Ryan Redford to score right on 45 minutes. Biggleswade started the second half well and penned Drayton back which resulted in Cooper having a good chance but the defence crowded him out. Again Cooper tested the visitors which brought a good save from keeper Matthew Boswell. But Biggleswade were not to be denied and from the resulting corner, Redford headed his second and the Waders third goal on 55 minutes. Drayton came storming back and only an excellent save from keeper Dean Brightly kept them out. It was all Drayton now and Brightly spilled a shot but was saved by a defender clearing the ball. Drayton pressed forward and were unlucky to see a header from a corner hit the Waders post and bounce clear. With Drayton pushing up, they were caught on the break and Cooper scored as his shot looped up off the keeper and into the net on 67 minutes. Still the visitors plugged away and again had no luck as another effort hit the Waders bar and bounced over. Drayton were finally rewarded for their persistence when a Biggleswade defender Chris Hewitt put through his own goal from a corner kick. That made the final 10 minutes nail biting for the Waders fans as Drayton poured forward seeking more goals, but some last ditch Waders defending kept them at bay. Thus this thoroughly entertaining game ended 4-2 to Biggleswade who now meet the winners of the Whitley Bay v Stratford Town tie. If it's

Whitley Bay, a certain ex chairman of Milton Keynes City can give some advice on the welcome that awaits.

An excellent display from **Chalfont St. Peter** at Mill Meadow in front of their largest crowd of the season was good enough to overwhelm their youthful **Christchurch** opponents. A minute's silence was held before the game for the popular Dorset striker, Marc Burrows, who sadly lost his fight for life 5 days before the game after a short illness. The Saints attacked from the start, and got off to a dream start when they took the lead after only nine minutes when veteran keeper Stuart Kearn was unable to hold onto a shot from Terrell Lewis and Barry Brosnan, playing only his first First Team game of the season, pounced to fire home the rebound. Brosnan was only playing due to leading scorer Charlie Strutton's suspension.. He almost notched another four minutes later when he struck a beautiful curling shot from outside the area, but unfortunately it rebounded off the post and was scrambled to safety. A rare break from the visitors saw Liplow put a deflected header wide for a corner, but soon after the Saints scored again when defender Dan Taylor failed to cut out a pass from Mickey Swaysland to Terrell Lewis and the live wire forward rifled a shot in off the near post. The Saints continued to press forward, looking particularly dangerous down the left, and it was no surprise that the best goal of the game came from this quarter shortly before half time. A fine raking cross field pass from Ben Stack found Adam Louth and the winger produced a stunning finish to beat keeper Kearn. The second half continued in the same vein as a vibrant Chalfont side continued their dominance over a Christchurch team, who not surprisingly after the events of the week, looked not to be at their best. Seven minutes after the break the result was put beyond doubt when Lee Togwell confirmed your reporter's view of his man of the match status with a through ball to Lewis , who slotted home for his second goal of the game. Christchurch occasionally got forward to give their large travelling supporters some hope of at least a consolation goal, but in truth Chalfont had many more chances to add to their tally. Luke Brooke-Smith had a shot deflected wide, Alan Hedley had a shot blocked by Kearn, and Swaysland was denied by a covering defender. Fittingly, the final effort came from MoM Togwell who rattled the crossbar.

**FA Carlsberg VASE – QUARTER FINALS**

In the Quarter Finals, which take place on 28<sup>th</sup> February, Chalfont have to travel to Needham Market in Suffolk. A tough draw as Needham reached the Semi Finals last year, narrowly losing to the eventual winners – Kirkham & Wesham – but they gained some measure of revenge this season as they knocked the holders out in the last round. Biggleswade Town will also have to travel.....to either Whitley Bay or Stratford Town, the match being postponed until this coming Saturday. Whitley Bay, should they prevail, will also prove a tough nut to crack as they also reached the Semi Finals last year. Last season's beaten finalists, Lowestoft Town, were exempt until the Second Round, but have been drawn at home in every subsequent round. Their luck continues as they now play host to Bideford from North Devon. The full draw is listed below :-

Needham Market v Chalfont St. Peter  
Lowestoft Town v Bideford  
Glossop North End v St. Ives Town / Marske Utd  
Whitley Bay / Stratford Town v Biggleswade Town

**PREMIER DIVISION**

**Harefield United** retain their six point lead at the top following their dramatic 2-1 win away at struggling **Brimsdown Rovers**. Paul Haynes gave the Hares a first half lead, but Robert Teppett's goal in the 86<sup>th</sup> minute looked to have given Rovers a share of the points. However, two minutes later, Denver Morris struck to give the Hares maximum points. **Broxbourne Borough** remain in second place after beating **Kingsbury London Tigers** 2-1 at home. Two goals from Ryan Wade, including a first half penalty, gave Boro the ascendancy, but Tigers staged a late revival with a goal from Joel Pardal in the 83<sup>rd</sup> minute to give the hosts a nervous last seven minutes. **Oxhey Jets** had a very convincing 5-1 victory over third placed **Colney Heath**, and move up to take their place,

relegating Heath back to fourth in consequence. Nathan Roberts gave the Jets a flying start with a goal after 8 minutes, but although a Carl Ashton penalty brought Heath level shortly afterwards, Oxhey dominated the rest of the game and goals, from Adam Lowton, Tim O'Mara (2), and Steve Brown came at regular intervals. **Hanwell Town** lost the chance to join Oxhey and Colney Heath in third place on 42 points when they returned empty handed from their trip up the A1 to **Biggleswade United**. All three goals in the game came in the first half hour – two from Mesach Cole for Utd with Hanwell's reply coming from Chris Mills.

#### **DIVISION ONE**

Only two matches survived the weather and even without playing Royston town's title hopes were given a boost as nearest challengers **Kings Langley** went down to a narrow 4-3 defeat at home to improving **Cranfield**. This was their third defeat in the last 6 games, and they are now in reach of a whole posse of chasing clubs. Two goals inside 30 minutes put Cranfield in the driving seat at half time, and they extended that lead to three when Ellis Spence netted not long after the restart. A tremendous fight-back saw Langley back on level terms with just four minutes left, with three goals from Craig Preston, Ben Hammond, and Jack Johnson, but a minute after Johnson's equaliser, up popped Christian Lester with the winner. **Amersham Town** moved up one place to 7<sup>th</sup> themselves as they garnered another three points in their 2-1 win at home to **Amphill Town**. This win was their sixth in the last seven games – their last defeat being back in mid November to leaders Royston – and puts them up into the fringes of the promotion race. A first half goal from Denilson Vincente put Amersham on the way, and Adamson Ajayi doubled the lead half way through the second half. John Veitch gave the visitors hope with 8 minutes left, but Amersham survived the last nervy minutes.

#### **DIVISION TWO**

There was just the one game in this Division. Originally intended to be at **Padbury United**, a sensible late switch of venue to Chalfont Campus, home of **Bucks Student Union** enabled the game to go ahead. The effort incurred by the Students in making the switch was rewarded as they ran out 3-0 winners – all the goals coming in the second half through Gerald Kelly ( back from a brief sabbatical at Hillingdon Boro), Chris Cox, and Daddy Moses. This win moves the Students up to 7<sup>th</sup> place, their highest placing since joining the League, and with games in hand, leaves them with a good chance of heading the pack chasing the top four.

#### **HERTS SENIOR TROPHY CENTENARY TROPHY - SEMI FINAL**

**Hoddesdon Town** had to overcome a spirited **London Lions** fight-back before they eventually triumphed 3-2 after extra time. With just 5 minutes left, the Lilywhites were leading 2-0, with goals from Nick Newbury and Colin Metivier, and already dreaming of their day out at the final, but two late goals from Adam Stolerman and Dominic and Cheniart brought the collywobblers to the Hoddesdon faithful. It also brought extra time, and although Hoddesdon were reduced to 10 men following a sending off, Lee Tombs popped up with the winner just before the end to send Hoddesdon into their second successive County Final. They now await the winners of the twice postponed tie between Park Street Village and Hatfield Town.

#### **IS THIS THE STRANGEST PITCH INSPECTION EVER?**

Your esteemed Referee's Secretary Mick Ewen is travelling to Antigua to do a pitch inspection for the Antiguan FA. Apparently a set of cricket stumps – 22 yards apart – mysteriously appeared over the weekend on the Recreation Ground in the middle of the centre circle. Just wait until the League Treasurer receives Mr Ewen's travel expenses!

Hopefully we have seen the last of the snow, and the much talked about green shoots of recovery will apply to our football pitches as well.

**Thanks to Bob Flight for the Biggleswade report. All items of news, interest, tittle-tattle, etc. re your club, are very welcome.**

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