

MOLTEN SPORTS
SPARTAN SOUTH MIDLANDS FOOTBALL LEAGUE

NEWSLETTER No. 30
By Bill Scholes

Saturday 7th March 2009

Congratulations to Chalfont St. Peter who have now reached the Semi Finals of the FA Vase following their penalty-shoot out victory over Needham Market in their Quarter Final Replay. Video highlights of this game, plus an interview with Manager Danny Edwards, can be seen on the FA website. Just the two legged Semi Final to overcome now, and they could well be cavorting up Wembley Way.

Three hat tricks this week and a nice symmetry – one in each Division. Craig Hammond topped the list with four for Royston Town, whilst Mesach Cole scored three for Biggleswade United, and Daddy Moses scored three for Bucks Student Union.

F.A. Carlsberg VASE – QUARTER FINAL REPLAY
Chalfont St. Peter 0 Needham Market 0 (aet)
Chalfont won 6-5 on penalties

A marvellous save from Mark Oliver in a sudden-death penalty shootout put Chalfont through to the semi finals of the FA Vase where they will play a two legged tie against Glossop North End (Derby) on 28th March and 4th April, and they will be dreaming of a short trip up the road to Wembley! The home match on 28th March will hopefully see a crowd of 1000+, which would be double the one at Mill Meadow on Saturday! The dramatic save saw the keeper leap to his right to tip the ball onto the bar to bring an end to the run of eleven successful spot kicks, although he almost kept out the previous one. He was promptly engulfed by his jubilant team mates, who remembered how he had kept them in the competition previously! In a tight first half the best chance fell to the visitors, who were convinced that they had forced the ball over the line following a goalmouth scramble, but the referee waved play on. Charlie Strutton had a shot deflected wide and Gareth Paxton was disappointed not to have done better when well placed. Alan Hedley also put a good opportunity wide just before the break. After the interval the home side were generally in control and they created the majority of the clear cut chances. Terrell Lewis headed a Ben Stack free kick wide, and Paxton did the same with the goal gaping. Midway through the half the Saints had a big scare when Jerome Okimo misdirected a header, but fortunately Oliver was sufficiently alert to dive to his right to keep it out. Soon after, substitute Barry Brosnan put a golden chance over the bar from a corner. With only a couple of minutes of normal time left, Needham's Mark Bailey was dismissed for a hefty challenge on Brosnan which left the striker on the ground needing treatment, although he managed to recover. Only twenty seconds remained when Brosnan was pushed over in the area, but appeals for a spot kick were turned down. Extra time saw the Suffolk side defending desperately and trying to hang on for spot kicks. Chalfont tried hard to make the extra man count, but the closest they came was when skipper John Carroll connected with another Stack free kick, but the ball came back off the inside of the post and was scrambled clear. The second period again saw the Saints almost get the decisive goal through Brosnan, who was blocked by Jones in the visitor's goal, and he put another good chance wide when well placed in the area. And so to the dreaded penalty shoot out. Even the penalties went to sudden death as both teams scored their first five each (was Fabio watching?) – Brosnan scored Chalfont's sixth, and then Mark Oliver became the hero saving Needham's sixth.

PREMIER DIVISION

Harefield United extended their lead at the top to 13 points, although they had to wait until the second minute of added on time before Adam Willis scored the all important goal in their hard fought 1-0 win over **Kingsbury London Tigers**. The huge Championship Shield now looks to be

heading towards Preston Park, although Chalfont St. Peter could still have a say if they can win all their games in hand – bit of a tall order though. **Broxbourne Borough's** challenge appears to be petering out as they lost 3-1 at home to **Brimsdown Rovers**, who have certainly picked up a few points recently. Adam Moss put Rovers in the lead before Ryan Wade equalised in the first half, but Rovers scored twice in the second half through Nicky Steward and Jamie O'Donoghue to wrap up the points. **Hanwell Town** move up into third spot as they took maximum points from their game away at basement side **Holmer Green**. Holmer were fresh from their midweek win over Biggleswade town, and took an early lead but fell apart in the last 17 minutes as Hanwell rattled in three quick goals. **Biggleswade Town** recovered from their mini slump of losing the last four games with a 4-0 win at home to **Haringey Borough**. Glen Lamacraft gave the Waders a first half lead, and although Kevin Kilroy added a second not long after the break, that had to wait until the last few minutes of the game before Daniel Flack and Dane Heron completed the scoring. **Langford** went behind to an early Aaron Usmani goal away at **Aylesbury Vale** but secured the 2-1 win with goals from Wes Byrne and Liam Etherington. **Leverstock Green** had to settle for a point in their 3-3 draw away at **Colney Heath**, having led 3-1 at half time. A brace from Danny Griggs and one from David Parkinson had cancelled out Aaron Clarke's opener for the home side and put the Green in a commanding position, but two goals from two super subs – Richie Howard and Jonathon Donoghue, pulled Colney back on level terms. **Cockfosters** re-established their 5 point gap between themselves and bottom club Holmer Green with a 2-1 win at home to **Hertford Town**. Two goals in the space of four minutes in the first half put the Reds in a strong position, but they had to endure a nervous second half after Robert Luya reduced the deficit with just over 30 minutes left and they were reduced to 10 men for the last 15 minutes following Rakim Richards' dismissal. Importantly, Cockfosters are now only two points behind Haringey Boro who must be dreading a quick return to Division One. **Welwyn Garden City** returned empty handed from their visit to **St. Margaretsbury**, going down 3-1, but they did have the excuse of playing a stand-in keeper in Mark Blackburne. John Barker gave Bury the lead and a brace from ex Citizen Mark Draper extended the lead to three before Matt Thompson scored a late consolation goal.

DIVISION ONE

In the Division's match of the day, four goals by leading scorer Craig Hammond enabled **Royston Town** to beat **New Bradwell St.Peter** 5-2 to stay top of the table. The first half was fairly even and it was the Peters side that showed the most flair in attacking. However, they were caught on the break and Craig Hammond scored from close range as he converted a right wing cross. This seemed to subdue Peters but galvanise Royston into more attacks and the Peters goal only survived through the lack of a proper Royston finish. Peters had an early chance in the second half but the keeper saved when the forward looked odds on to score. This respite reminded Royston that one goal is never enough and they bombarded the Peters goal. But the breakthrough came from a defender's mistake, which allowed Hammond to hit his second goal on 58 minutes. Worse was to follow for Peters when their stand-in keeper dropped the ball and Ricky Young blasted the ball into the net on 68 minutes. To their credit, Peters never gave up and they got back into the match on 73 minutes from the penalty spot scored by Dean Robb. Indeed, Peters could and perhaps should have scored again only moments later but the Royston keeper came to his team's rescue. This was another reminder for Royston that the game was far from won and they pushed on as the Peters defence crumbled to allow Hammond two more goals, scored through headers from crosses in the 79th and 81st minutes. Almost on the final whistle, Peters scored again as a Dean Robb effort was deflected into the top of the Royston net. This was an entertaining match with some excellent football from Royston who now look set to win the division title and promotion to the Premier Division. **Hatfield Town** also scored five goals, against luckless **Brache Sparta**, as they kept themselves in the hunt – almost certainly for second place. **Hoddesdon Town** were the only other team in the top eight who managed a win, beating **Amptill Town** 3-2 away. Craig Hinton, Sam Dempsey, and Lee Tombs scored the Lilywhites goals, whilst Steve Goodridge and Lee Hayward replied for the home side. **Amersham Town** must have thought they had all three points in the bag in their away game at

Crawley Green, but Steve McKiernan spoilt their celebrations with a goal in the 3rd minute of added on time. Up until then, Amersham had led with goals from Adamson Ajayi and Denilson Vicente, with Crawley's reply coming from James Potter. A 2-2 draw was also the result in the game between **London Colney** and **Harpenden Town**. Ian Cooper gave Colney an early lead, but Harpenden struck back with a first half equaliser from James Warner and then took the lead with eight minutes left through William Bates. Colney, however, persevered and Cooper got his, and Colney's second, with a couple of minutes remaining. The battle of the Bedford's was won by **Bedford**, who defeated their very close neighbours **Bedford Town Reserves** 2-1. Town Reserves could not very well claim travel sickness, but they were always behind in the game. A penalty from Mark Reed and a second half strike from Alec Thomas put Bedford two up before Ashley Deverell reduced the deficit for Town Reserves just before the end. **Stony Stratford Town** enjoyed a 4-0 win at home to **Sun Postal Sports** thanks to goals from Steve Flux, Steve Young, Lewis McBride and Dan Walker, and the same scoreline was recorded at **Sport London e Benfica** although the visitors **Cranfield United** were the beneficiaries – the goals coming from Stuart Reynolds (2), Tommy Resch, and Christian Lester. A goal in the 90th minute gave **Arlesey Athletic** a vital win away at **Buckingham Athletic**, helping them to move away from the relegation zone, where it is beginning to look as though two from Brache Sparta, Sport London and Buckingham Athletic will face the drop. In the remaining game in the Division, early front runners **Winslow United** drew 1-1 at home to **Tokyngton Manor**. Veteran Paul Talbot gave Winslow a first half lead, but Peter Owen levelled the scoring with twenty minutes left.

DIVISION TWO

There is no change in the top 6 placings, but the gap between the top four and the chasing pack has come down from 9 to 6 points. Hadley and The 61 FC remain locked together at the top – both on 54 points and both having an identical goal difference of 45. **The 61 FC** closed the goal difference gap by beating **Bletchley Town** 4-0 away with goals from Brian Smith (2), Alan Willis and Chris Mapp, whilst **Hadley** could only manage a 2-0 win away at **Markyate**, both goals coming from Badhir Asawahli. **Wodson Park** went down to a solitary goal scored by Ian O'Dell at home to **Tring Corinthians** who are now breathing down the neck of **Bucks Student Union**. The Students are closing steadily on Wodson Park, and they maintained their good form with a 5-0 home win over **Old Bradwell United** – a hat trick from Daddy Moses and singles from Steve McQueen and Marco Chiavetta doing the damage. **Mursley United** kept in touch with the chasing pack with a 3-2 win at home to **Kent Athletic**. All the goals came in the second half – Kent opened the scoring through Mark Brown but a goal from Christian Bamber and two from Ed Mills put Mursley firmly in control until the 88th minute when Darren Lynch reduced the deficit for Kent. Two goals in two minutes from Richard Gilmore and Martin Griggs immediately after the break enabled **Risborough Rangers** to cancel out **Caddington's** early opener, whilst **Aston Clinton** triumphed 3-1 away at second from bottom **Totternhoe**. **Padbury United** scored very early on through Andre Brown at home to **Pitstone & Ivinghoe** and hung on to collect all three points.

DIVISION ONE CUP SEMI FINALS

The two semi finals for the above Cup took place last week. The first Semi saw top v second as **Royston Town** hosting **Kings Langley** and the league leaders progressed through to their first Final for 4 years with a 2-0 win over their visitors. Tom Malins scored with a free kick immediately before the break and Danny Payne slotted home from 6 yards with just 5 minutes left. The following night **Amphill Town** visited **Crawley Green** as they attempted to reach their second successive Final, and they emerged triumphant with a 2-1 win. Two goals just before half time, from Anthony Wright and Steve Goodridge, gave them the edge, and Robbie O'Dell's goal for Crawley in added on time at the end was too late to inspire an equaliser.

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

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