

MOLTEN SPORTS
SPARTAN SOUTH MIDLANDS FOOTBALL LEAGUE

NEWSLETTER No. 34

By Bill Scholes

Saturday 4th April 2009

Commiserations to Chalfont St. Peter, who had Wembley Way in their sights, only to have their dreams dashed in the dying seconds of their 2nd leg Semi Final. Chalfont St. Peter were a credit to the League – their behaviour and that of their management team and the small loyal band of supporters, was exemplary – just to get through both nerve jangling semi finals without a booking in sight was an example to all. Sadly, the behaviour of a large number of Glossop fans behind one goal, who appeared to have sipped copiously of the Competition sponsor's product from the temporary beer tent (!) was not exemplary, and worthy of closer examination by the relevant authorities.

There were 5 hat trick heroes this week. In the Premier Division, Ashley Addison scored all three for Tring Athletic, and in Division One it was Craig Hammond for Royston Town and Daniel Burnett for Sport London e Benfica. On the ball in Division Two; were Nick Hughes of Padbury United and Steve Lewis of Tring Corinthians.

F.A. Carlsberg VASE – SEMI FINAL 2nd LEG
Glossop North End 2, Chalfont St. Peter 2 aet
Aggregate 5-5 – Glossop won 6-5 on penalties
“IT ONLY TAKES A SECOND TO SCORE A GOAL”

One of Brian Clough's famous quotes hung in the air on Saturday on a day of high drama in the High Peak as in the very last second of extra time Glossop scored an unlikely equaliser, and in so doing indelibly altered the programme of events planned by both teams for the next month. Chalfont St. Peter were literally moments away from a Wembley Final, only for their dreams to be snatched away in the blink of an eye. The tie went to penalties, and suddenly it was Glossop who were in dreamland. Playing conditions were almost identical to the previous week (apart from the hail) with a strong and blustery wind making good football very difficult. The official attendance was 1583 – I guess that didn't include the 100 or so spectators peering over the wall down one side – and most were wearing blue and white. They had something to cheer about almost immediately as Rick Bailey, in space on the Glossop left, slotted home rather easily to give the home side a great start. Initially rattled, Chalfont began to settle down and deservedly equalised through Terrell Lewis after Glossop's diminutive keeper fumbled a cross in the swirling wind. Chalfont continued to have the better of the play which to be fair was either in midfield, where Alan Hedley worked tirelessly, or in the air where John Carroll and Gareth Paxton were rarely beaten. Extra time, and again Chalfont were on the front foot and could well have taken the lead after 97 minutes when Mickey Swaysland, who led the line excellently after coming on as sub in the second half, took advantage of another mistake by the pink shirted keeper but his left foot goal bound curling shot was cleared off the line by a stooping header. With 4 minutes remaining before the end of the first period, the error prone Glossop keeper spilled a long range shot which Charlie Strutton gleefully slotted home to send the small Green and Red army into raptures, whilst silencing the majority of the crowd at the same time. Into the second period and Chalfont continued to defend well and with cramp affecting a number of Glossop players their task began to look hopeless. Bang on 120 minutes a shot from Jay Gorton narrowly skimmed the bar and that seemed game over. Three minutes into added on time, the referee's whistle had the Chalfont bench up and on the pitch, but no.....it was only a free kick to Glossop.

Where was this added on time coming from? The ball was pumped into the box and a corner resulted. All 22 players were in the penalty area and from the resultant corner Kelvin Lugsden rifled the ball home. Cue bedlam....and a pitch invasion. Once the pitch had been cleared, Chalfont kicked off and the referee immediately blew for time. Once again the Saints were involved in a penalty shoot out to achieve a result, and once again it ended 6-5, but unfortunately this time it was in favour of the opposition. Hero of the hour was the Glossop keeper Ashlea Gotham who saved Chalfont's 6th penalty. Given the occasion, and

the potential outcome, the overall quality of the 11 penalties was very good – 2 were well saved, one by each keeper, and only one missed the target altogether. By general consent of all the assembled neutral dignitaries (The FA, the Derbyshire FA, the Manchester FA, The North West Counties League, not forgetting of course the slightly biased officials of the SSMF League) the better side lost,but of course that is of little consolation to Chalfont. We wish Glossop North End all the very best in the Final against Whitley Bay.

PREMIER DIVISION

It really is Game-on for the league title as we move into the last month of the season. Biggleswade Town moved to within 3 points of leaders Harefield United and with a game in hand, but Chalfont St. Peter should not be discounted as they are now clear to concentrate their efforts on making their games in hand count. With Harefield, Hanwell and Chalfont not in league action, the spotlight fell on **Biggleswade Town**, who secured their 11th unbeaten game on the spin but it was hard work as they eventually overcame an obdurate **Cockfosters** 2-0. It was a big week for the Waders as, following their 3-0 win over leaders Harefield last Saturday; they beat second placed **Hanwell Town** 2-0 away on Tuesday. Eric Harrison thought it one of the best games seen this season, and sent in the following report. “In the first 10 minutes, Hanwell Town could have, and probably should have, scored at least two goals. A fantastic save and Biggleswade throwing their bodies in the way of shots on goal kept the scoreline 0 - 0. Both teams played very good football, lots of one two's but failed to complete very good moves. Then the deadlock was broken in the 35th minute. From just inside his opponents half, Mark Webster (my man of the match), hit the ball way in the air towards goal. It caught the Hanwell goalkeeper off his line and although he desperately tried to keep the ball from crossing the line from under the bar, the Assistant Referee flagged to indicate that the ball had crossed the line. The second half was played just like the first. End-to-end with both teams going close to scoring. Then in the 67th minute, Biggleswade scored what I considered, my goal of the season (so far). Play developed down the right, the ball floated across to an unmarked Dan Heron who hit the ball on the volley leaving the Hanwell goalkeeper like a statue. Still Hanwell kept pressing forward and still they had chances. This left them open at the back leaving Biggleswade free to attack at will. It was an exciting game, controlled well by the three officials. Only one caution and both teams played in the right spirit - I look forward to the return game to be played later in the month.” Sadly, the Waders game on Thursday against **Leverstock Green** was not in the same league (pun!) and a fairly abrasive game saw Biggleswade fortunate to escape with a 2-2 draw, playing with 10 men for 60 minutes after Kevin Cooper's dismissal for alleged use of the elbow.

Back to Saturday, and the away game at **Cockfosters**. A large crowd of 80 saw numerous aerial battles and it was from one such encounter that Glen Lamacraft headed the Waders into the lead(or was it an OG?) just before half time. Seven minutes after the break, the Cockfosters keeper could only parry a Lamacraft cross into the path of Kevin Cooper who made no mistake from close range to give the visitors a two goal cushion which they maintained until the end. The Reds went down to 10 men when Steve Kessack was dismissed later in the second half. **Welwyn Garden City** enjoyed an emphatic 3-0 win at home to local rivals **Colney Heath**. Fabio Valenti opened the scoring on the half hour with a 25 yard shot past keeper Tom Blackman, and the same player added his second a minute after the break. Adam Wallace scored the third when he linked up well with Valenti to slot past the keeper. Ashley Addison scored his first hat trick for **Tring Athletic** since signing from Berkhamsted Town in mid season as they beat **Kentish Town** 3-1 at home – Srđan Jovanovic getting a very late consolation for the visitors. **Oxhey Jets** ran out 3-1 winners away to **Leverstock Green**, with goals from Wayne Gladly, Carl Bull and Tim O'Mara – Charlie Gorman replying for Leverstock, and **Langford** had to battle hard to forge a 1-0 win away to relegation threatened **Haringey Borough** – the goal courtesy of Justin Griffiths with 15 minutes left. At the foot of the table, **Holmer Green** keep battling on and they gained a potentially useful point in their away game at **Brimsdown Rovers**. The home side took an early lead through Gerard Prenderville, but leading scorer Andy Shed again came to the rescue with his 75th minute equaliser. The game at **Aylesbury Vale** burst into life in the last half hour as John Barker put visitors **St. Margaretsbury** in front, but two quick goals in the 72nd and 78th minutes from Vale's John Bentley and Aaron Usmani gave the home side a welcome 2-1 win. Neither **Hertford Town** nor **Broxbourne Borough** managed to trouble the scorer in their game at Hertingfordbury Park, although there was plenty of good football to keep the crowd from getting restless.

DIVISION ONE

Royston Town clinched promotion back to the Premier Division (barring a mathematical miracle) as they enjoyed a comprehensive 4-1 win away at **Hoddesdon Town**. The largest crowd of the day (141) saw Craig Hammond break the 50 league goal barrier with yet another hat trick – I expect Division One defences will be glad to see the back of him! Hammond got the Crows off to flying start with a goal in the first minute, but although Colin Metivier brought Hoddesdon back level on the half hour mark, Ryan Lockett restored the lead just before the Jaffa break and another two from Hammond in the second half wrapped up the vital three points. The interest now resolves around second place, which is looking to be a battle between Kings Langley and Hatfield Town. Kings Langley remain in the driving seat – just – with a seven point lead over Hatfield, but they have played two games more. The clash between the two on Tuesday evening will be vital – I'm sure a goodly crowd will be in attendance. **Kings Langley** beat **Buckingham Athletic** 3-1 on Saturday with goals from Craig Preston, Steve Hutchins and Simon Conway, whilst **Hatfield Town** were slipping to a 3-2 defeat away at **Amersham Town**. Amersham led two nil at half time with goals from Denilson Vicente and, although Daryl Smith reduced the deficit, Vicente added his second shortly after wards to restore the two goal cushion. Back came Hatfield with a Trevor Golder effort, but they could not find the equaliser. **Cranfield United** saw the visit of **Harpenden Town** to Crawley Road as an opportunity to build upon their recent good form, but lost out to a single goal in the end. Two teams in mid table safety played out a rather dull event in which Harpenden just edged the match with their slick passing game. The first half saw little action with the only threat from Cranfield being a back header by Paul Stokes that the keeper saved. Just afterwards, Harpenden broke down the pitch to see Cranfield give away a corner kick. From this kick the ball was headed down to Ian Turkentine to blast the ball into the net from 20 yards on 28 minutes. Cranfield showed more urgency at the start of the second half but could not trouble the Harpenden defence. The visitors were seemingly happy to sit on their lead and the game was mostly played out in midfield. Harpenden had a late scare when a defender almost put through his own goal, but the keeper came to the rescue. Thus the game stuttered to an end with the promise of both teams now focussed on next season. **Bedford Town Reserves** lost 2-1 away at **Arlesey Athletic**, whilst their near neighbours **Bedford** triumphed by the same scoreline away at **Sun Postal Sports**. It was goals galore at **Sport London e Benfica** where the home side narrowly edged a nine goal thriller against **Winslow United**. SLB were indebted to a hat trick from Daniel Burnett, and they have won 4 out of their last 5 games as they now move above Buckingham Athletic and Sun Postal in the battle to move out of the relegation zone. **Brache Sparta** would appear not to be going down without a fight and their 2-1 win over **London Colney** at home was their second win in the last three games. However, their belated revival may have come too late. **New Bradwell St. Peter** dropped back in the pecking order at the top as they lost 1-0 away to **Tokington Manor**, whilst **Ampthill Town** had a good 2-0 home win over **Crawley Green**.

DIVISION TWO

Hadley beat **Wodson Park** 1-0 away with a Ricky Burrows goal in the 40th minute to stay top of the pile, but although they have a lead of three points they have played two games more than nearest rivals **The 61 FC** who kept on their tails with a 4-1 home win over **Markyate**. The Luton side were three goals to the good at half time thanks to an early Alex Bennett goal and a brace from Ryan Smith, and Aaron Lewis added the fourth immediately after the break before Shaun Burkett notched a consolation for Markyate. **AFC Dunstable** sit comfortably in third, following their 5-1 win at home to **Mursley United**, which included a brace from Richard Harker, and there is now a gap of some 13 points back to the chasing pack. Now up into the top four for the first time this season are **Tring Corinthians**, who are having a very up and down season, but two recent wins have moved them up the table. A hat trick from Steve Lewis enabled them to beat **Aston Clinton** 3-0, and move above Wodson Park and **Bucks Student Union**. The latter could have moved up to 5th had they won, but they went down 3-1 away at **Pitstone & Ivinghoe** for whom Nick Ryan scored a couple. Down in the basement, **Totternhoe** have moved out of the bottom two for the first time this season as they make a determined effort to avoid the re-election pots. They won 2-0 at home to **Risborough Rangers**, thanks to goals from James McCarthy (pen) and Gary Capehorn. Replacing them in the bottom two is **Old Bradwell United** who lost 4-1 away at **Padbury United**, for whom Nick Hughes scored a hat trick. Two first half goals from Mark Brown helped **Kent Athletic** to a 3-1 home win against **Caddington**, whose sole reply came from Daniel Edwards.

REFEREE APPOINTMENTS FOR SSMFL CUP FINALS

Congratulations to all the following referees who have obtained the prestigious Cup Final appointments, and of course the best of luck to all the other team involved in the Finals.

Challenge Trophy Final: Chalfont St Peter V Tring Athletic

Date: Tuesday 28 April 2009 KO 7.45pm Venue: Harefield United FC

Referee: Tim Donnellan: Assistant Referees Garry Starr & Adrian Waters
4th Official Andy Aylott

Premier Division Cup Final: St Margaretsbury V Tring Athletic

Date: Tuesday 5 May 2009 KO 7.45pm Venue: Colney Heath FC

Referee Jake Hillier: Assistant Referees Rob Smith & John Groom
4th Official Cliff Campbell

Division One Cup Final: Amptill Town V Royston Town

Date: Saturday 2 May 2009 KO 3:00pm Venue: Biggleswade Town FC

Referee Peter Saggars: Assistant Referees Barrie Gale & Mark Favell
4th Official Steve Conway

Division Two Cup Final: Hadley V Totternhoe

Date: Wednesday 6 May 2009 - KO 7:45pm Venue: London Colney FC

Referee John Chidley: Assistant Referees Stephen O'Connor & Terry Jeyes
4th Official Peter Hazel

Reserve Challenge Trophy Final: St Margaretsbury Res V Royston Town Res

Date: Thursday 30 April 2009 - KO 7:45pm Venue: Broxbourne Borough FC

Referee Ralph Morris: Assistant Referees Lewis Fowler & Iain Brown
4th Official Martyn Meadows

Whilst on the subject of refereeing appointments, congratulations to ex SSMFL referee Rob Mackay who picked up a plum appointment in the FA Vase 2nd Leg between Lowestoft and Whitley Bay.

REFEREE PROMOTIONS SEASON 2008-09

Congratulations to the following members of the Association of SSMFL Referees who have been promoted this season:

To Level 5 Ian Corner, Lewis Fowler, Kevin Hallett, Keith Hammond, Sam Lewis, Luigi Lungarella, Peter Nemeth, Neil Sharp, Charles Wilkinson & Matthew Young

To Level 6 Phillip Evans, Tom Ratheram, Dimitrios Rousis, Adam Ryan & Adrian Waters

HERE COMES SUMMER (School is out, oh happy day)

The words of Jerry Keller's teen anthem of the late 50's ran through my mind this morning as Postman Pat knocked on the door to present me with the 2009 Wisden Almanac. Sitting in the sunshine at lunchtime, and beginning to peruse the 1680 pages, I was already beginning to plan my travels around the cricket grounds of the country and contemplate a few months of life without abuse, be it verbal or physical, or without a LACK OF RESPECT for any form of authority.

All items of news, interest, tittle-tattle, etc. re your club, are very welcome.
Bill Scholes Tel No. 01494 713867 Email: billscholes@hotmail.co.uk