

MOLTEN SPORTS
SPARTAN SOUTH MIDLANDS FOOTBALL LEAGUE

NEWSLETTER No. 26
By Bill Scholes

Saturday 13th February 2010

Despite the presence of rain, sleet and snow showers, both in the preceding couple of days and during the day, there was only one game postponed (and that in Reserve Div One) from the total fixture list. A collective and very audible sigh of relief was heard from Phil and Eric.

Seven heroes ploughed through the heavy pitches to record hat tricks. In the Premier Division, Dan O'Connor got three for Dunstable Town and Lloyd Opara did likewise for Haringey Borough. Just the one in Division One, and that came from Harpenden Town's Chris Gregory. Division Two was the place for goals, as there were four hat tricks – two in one game at Aston Clinton where Aaron Usmani and Steve Powell came up trumps, one by Aaron Lewis for The 61 FC and one by Ed Mills for Mursley United.

FA Carlsberg VASE – 5th ROUND

An extremely disappointing day for the crowd of 650 at Garden Walk where **Royston Town** were at home to **Wroxham** as they attempted to reach the Quarter Finals for the very first time. Wroxham started much the brighter and took the lead after just three minutes when the lively and tricky Steve Spriggs was played in down the right hand side and his powerful shot from a tight angle beat Royston keeper Jordan Gibson at the near post. Royston played some neat football but with no real cutting edge up front and throughout the first half Wroxham looked more likely to score, winning four corners and having three shots on target. The second half started much the same as the first half and once again it was that man Spriggs, down the right, who scored his second on 50 minutes. The now deflated Royston took another hit two minutes later when Danny White finished off a good piece off attacking play for Wroxham's third. Royston manager Paul Atfield then looked to steady the ship on 65 minutes by making a double substitution with Tom Malins and Russell Bull coming on for Carl Edwards and Ricky Young but two minutes later Royston defender David Cain gave away a needless penalty for a push in the box. White stepped up to take the penalty which Gibson turned on to his right hand post only to see the ball roll along the goal line and cross the line off his left hand post. On 70 minutes Royston striker Will Turl forced a good save from Wroxham keeper Scott Howie. Wroxham substitute Matt Daniels made it five on 80 minutes to hammer the final nail in Royston's coffin. Royston's afternoon was summed up on 83 minutes after they were awarded a penalty for a foul on Turl. Winger Luke Robins stepped up to take the penalty only to see his weak attempt well saved by Howie. A bad day at the office for the Crows, but Wroxham looked a more than useful outfit.

PREMIER DIVISION

There has been no change in placings at the top table, but perhaps a slight shift in the dynamics. Chalfont St Peter has a one point lead over Tring Athletic but with a game in hand. However, for the four teams below it was a disappointing day as all of them tasted defeat with the biggest surprise being Aylesbury losing 4-1 at Dunstable Town. Aylesbury are now 5 points behind Chalfont, although they do have a game in hand. Colney Heath also suffered a surprise 4-1 reverse against lowly Haringey Borough, but maintained the four point gap over 5th placed Leverstock Green who also lost.

Kingsbury London Tigers were looking to take their second successive big three scalp as they took on **Chalfont St. Peter** at home, but narrowly failed, eventually going down 3-2. Adam Louth put the Saints ahead on the half hour mark, only for Tigers to equalise two minutes later through Henry Emenike. It only took another two minutes before Chalfont were back in front as Danny Hughes found the back of the net, and leading scorer Charlie Strutton added to the lead five minutes before the break. The Tigers fought back in the second half, and Emenike's second goal with 11 minutes left gave Saints supporters some nervous moments but the leaders held on for a vital victory. The game between **Tring Athletic** and **Langford** was over as a contest after 35 minutes as Tring raced into a five goal lead. Langford has the most porous defence in the League, and it showed. An early goal from full back David Salmon started the rot, and was quickly followed by strikes from Graham Hall, Ashley Addison, Robbie Duncan and Danny Gray. Langford produced a much better performance in the second half, conceding just the one goal and that from a deflected free kick for Hall's second with just 3 minutes left. **Dunstable Town** sent title hopefuls **Aylesbury** home with their tails between their legs as they gained some small revenge for two previous Cup defeats with an emphatic 4-1 victory. Despite the recent signing of the much travelled striker Grant Carney, late of the parish of Crawley Green, Aylesbury went down to their 5th League defeat of the season. The first of Dan O'Connor's three goals came on 30 minutes, and Douglas Kissuule headed the second right on half time. Kieran Schmidt gave Aylesbury hope when he stabbed the ball home after a goalmouth scramble immediately after the break, but O'Connor completed his hat trick in the 50th and 58th minutes. Switching the match to **Colney Heath's** ground proved to be a worthwhile exercise for **Haringey Borough** as they romped to their highest score of the season with a 4-1 win. Lloyd Opara was the hero with a hat-trick and Adam Scotcher was also on target for the second week running. But it was not all plain sailing as Jon Donoghue gave Heath the lead after eleven minutes and they did not get back on terms until a minute from the interval when Opara scored his first from the penalty spot. Scotcher put Borough in front 5 minutes after the restart, and Opara sealed all three points as he completed his hat trick. **Leverstock Green** slipped to their second defeat in four days when they went down 5-2 away to **Harefield United**. Of the 7 goals, only Kemo Maphelia's came in the first half, but Craig Totton (twice), Ben Cowan and Adam Willis scored four more in the second period, as Green's replies came from Bill Morgan and debutant Adam Read. **Welwyn Garden City** moved away from the foot of the stairs after their 2-0 away win at **St Margaretsbury**. Goals from Piero Bagarone and Emanuel Abessima secured the Citizens a vital three points in their fight to stave off relegation this season and the victory ended a run of six games without a win. **Hillingdon Borough** put more daylight between themselves and the bottom three as they beat bottom club **Kentish Town** 2-0, with goals from Thomas Crouch and a Romero Pinto penalty. The largest

crowd in the Premier Division (102) saw **Hatfield Town** slip to a 2-1 defeat at the hands of **Hanwell Town**. Michael Buckley gave the visitors an early lead and this was doubled on the stroke of half time by Gashan Bradshaw. For the second Saturday running, Hatfield had to produce a second half comeback, but although Lewis Field cut the deficit on 68 minutes, they again fell just short. **Biggleswade United** won their third game out of the last four as they came back from **Brimsdown Rovers** with a 3-0 win, and in so doing moved themselves well up into mid table. Their goals came from David Parker, Luke Lincoln and Emanuel Langlais. Brimsdown's cause was not helped by having two players red carded in the second half. **Oxhey Jets** completed the double over **Broxbourne Borough** with a 3-2 home win. Goals from Ian Bywater (Jets) and Jamie O'Donoghue (Boro) ensured that both teams were all square going into the last 10 minutes of the game, but two goals from Lee Armitz put the Jets in front, although Ben Andreos made it very close right at the end.

DIVISION ONE

Bedford Town Reserves hosted league leaders **Holmer Green** on a grey afternoon in Bedfordshire and it was Green than ran out winners 2 – 0 with a goal in each half. Town started well and had the most of the early possession but without really creating a clear cut chance. However there was a hectic scramble in the Green goalmouth with the ball being eventually cleared from danger. Green scored against the run of play when a free kick was not cleared and Simon Williams hit the ball home from close range on 14 minutes. Green had a couple of shots saved and Town saw a free kick go narrowly wide. The second half saw Green dominate the early play and a chance went begging when a forward mis-kicked when unmarked in front of the Town goal. However, the pressure told when a great through ball set Williams clear and he side footed the ball past the keeper on 59 minutes to score his second of the game. Green continued to press but saw their shots go wide or over the Town goal. Town had a great chance but the forward turned and shot wide from close in. The final 15 minutes of the game saw Town make two substitutions that injected some urgency into their play and they pinned Green back. But despite a shot that hit the top of the Green crossbar and a free kick that was well saved, their efforts came to nought. Holmer are now two points clear, but have three games in hand on nearest rivals **Crawley Green** who consolidated their position with a 2-1 win at home over third placed **Hadley**, but they had to wait until the 90th minute before Jermaine Hall scored the winner. Earlier, Stefan McNeilly gave Crawley the lead, only for Danny Gruar to level it up from the penalty spot just before half time. **New Bradwell St Peter** move up to third, following their 2-0 home win over **Amptill Town**, Lee Coulter and Adam Castagnetti scoring the goals. In-form Bernie Christie scored a brace for **AFC Dunstable** as they came back from **Cranfield United** with a comprehensive 7-0 victory. It was only 2-0 at the break, an OG adding to Christie's first, but further strikes in the second period came from James Baldry, Christie, Ryan Quinn and Craig Butler. (That's actually only 6, Jim). **Amersham Town** recorded their third win on the trot, all away, as they defeated **Sun Postal Sports** 2-1. The hosts took the lead in the 72nd minute through Leon Stewart, but four minutes later Amersham were in front following an OG and a goal from Jamie Gumbs. A 63rd minute goal from Scott Latham enabled **Buckingham Athletic** to consolidate their mid table position with a 1-0 win over neighbours **Stony Stratford Town**. A topsy-turvy game at **Bedford** between the home side and **Hoddesdon Town** eventually ended 4-4, but not before both sides probably thought they had done enough to win the game. Hoddesdon

raced into a two goal lead through Craig Hinton and Jason Sorial, only for Phil Fisher to reduce the deficit a minute later. The Lilywhites extended their lead when Tony Neilson scored from the 12 yard spot after 56 minutes, but this lead was cut back to one when Ashley Kersey headed home in the 64th minute. Bedford had an opportunity to draw level in the 85th minute from the penalty spot, but keeper Alan Buck saved Mark Reed's kick. However all was not lost as a couple of minutes later Fisher scored his second from 22 yards out. With a minute to go, the pendulum swung back in favour of Hoddesdon as Steve Cawley scored an excellent individual goal, but Chas Bailey ruined the celebrations as he headed home in the second minute of added on time to ensure a share of the points for Bedford. Another side to recover from a two goal deficit were **Harpenden Town**, and Chris Gregory's treble ensured their share of the points at **Tokington Manor**. Manor's goals came from Tim Maynard, a Melford Simpson penalty and Stuart Farrell.

DIVISION TWO

Aston Clinton closed the gap on leaders Berkhamsted to one point following their 10-1 demolition of **Old Bradwell United** who, following a bright start to the season have now slipped back to the foot of the stairs. Aaron Usmani and Steve Powell both scored hat tricks, Darren Woollard got a brace and John Dempsey and Neil Roberts notched one a piece. Old Bradwell's sole reply came from Craig Gorrey. **Berkhamsted** could only manage a point in their home 4-4 draw with **The 61 FC**, despite being 4-2 up with less than twenty minutes left. Aaron Lewis, with the third of his three goals, and Current Mutanga, was responsible for the Luton side's late comeback, after a brace from Lawrence Bunker and singles from Tony Burnett and Steve Hawes had put Berko in front. Doubles from Jack Friend and Tyler Hatherly (2 penalties) helped **Wodson Park** to a 6-2 home win over **Kent Athletic**, whilst **Padbury United** overcame visitors **Totternhoe** 3-1, despite being reduced to 10 men late in the second half. **MK Wanderers** progress continues as they came back from **Risborough Rangers** with a 2-0 win, thanks to goals from Mathew Old and a Sam Parrish penalty. **Bucks Student Union's** push for promotion came slightly unhinged as they rather surprisingly went down 5-3 at home to **Mursley United**, for whom Ed Mills scored a hat trick, and Martin Shaw and Chris Pittam notched singles. Gerald Kelly scored a brace for the Students, and Lloyd Honeyghan – not *the* Lloyd Honeyghan, but son of – got the other. Two goals in the last 15 minutes from Mark Medlin and Jack Downes ensured that **Caddington** shared the points with **Pitstone & Ivinghoe** - Kevin Temple scoring both the visitors goals in the first half. The same scoreline of 2-2 was also the score in the game at **Tring Corinthians**, where **Bletchley Town** rescued a point with an equaliser in the 90th minute from Steve Keane. Neil Richardson gave Corrie an early lead, which was cancelled out by Jamie Burroughs equaliser just before the break. Karl Davidson put Corrie back in front with 15 minutes to go, but up popped Keane right at the end.

HERTS SENIOR CENTENARY TROPHY – SEMI-FINAL

London Colney needed extra time against **Kings Langley** before sealing a place in the Final against Wormley Rovers. In the first 90 minutes both teams cancelled each other out with neither keeper having a shot to save. 12 seconds into the 1st period of extra time Dave Parkinson escaped his marker for almost the first time in the match to slot home a through ball to give London Colney the lead. Kings Langley threw everything at London Colney after this in the search for an equaliser and had two great chances but were unable to hit

the target. They created another good chance but the Colney keeper made a very good save. In the second period of extra time Dave Parkinson made himself another good chance to seal the tie but put his shot wide. Kings Langley continued to press in search of an equaliser and once again the Colney keeper denied them with a splendid save, but in time added at the end of extra time Russell Gallagher ensured London Colney reached the final with a second and tie sealing goal.

MIDWEEK TUESDAY 16th FEBRUARY

The sighs of relief from the Fixture Secretaries turned to anguish as exactly half (9) of the 18 planned fixtures fell foul of the weather.

Premier Division: Top of the table clash at Haywood Way resulted in a 3-3 draw between **Aylesbury** and **Chalfont St. Peter**, a result which probably pleased Tring Athletic. Aylesbury would have been pleased to come back from 3-1 down at half time, despite having manager Mark Eaton dismissed from the dugout for offering free but unwanted advice to the Referee. Chalfont are now two points clear of Tring at the top, and five points ahead of Aylesbury, although the latter have a game in hand. **Harefield United** beat **Dunstable Town** 2-0 at Creasey Park, and move up a place to 6th, whilst Royston Town, perhaps still under the weather following their FA Vase exit, could only manage a 2-2 draw at home to St. Margaretsbury.

Division One: **AFC Dunstable** moved up into the top six after their comprehensive 6-0 win away at **Stony Stratford Town**, aided in no small part by a hat trick from Terry Billy, a recent signing from ground sharers Dunstable Town. **Harpenden Town** also climbed a few places up the table as they beat **Buckingham Athletic** 2-1, and **Kings Langley** leapfrogged **Hoddesdon Town** following their 2-1 win at Lowfield. A Jason Layne hat trick for **Bedford** helped his side to a 4-3 away win at **Amphill Town**, for whom Gavin Hansell's hat trick was to no avail.

ANOTHER NEW MANAGER AT TOKYNGTON MANOR

Following the resignation last month of Shayne Chandler, Tokyngton Manor has appointed Atanas Chakalov as First Team manager, and he will be assisted by Tim Maynard. Chakalov will work closely with Reserve Team Coach Uly Ashun and Youth Team boss Ricardo Soares.

AND CHANGES AT CRANFIELD UNITED

After the resignation of Dean Chapman a couple of weeks ago, Youth team manager Pat Booden is currently caretaking the manager's role, and he is being assisted by Lee Bearman who has moved over from Padbury United.

AND FINALLY.....

An eventful afternoon at Padbury United on Saturday began just before the game commenced when the Police arrived to arrest one of the Padbury players. The player concerned, in full football kit, did a runner across the field of play, hotly pursued by the local Constabulary. Presumably he would have been the recipient of two cautions – one from the Referee for leaving the field of play without permission, and one from the Police. Adds up to a Red Card!

**As always, please send in any news, views, items of interest etc - to
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