

MOLTEN SPARTAN SOUTH MIDLANDS FOOTBALL LEAGUE NEWSLETTER No. 1

By Bill Scholes

This is the first issue of what is hoped will become a regular occurrence during the season. The frequency of issue will depend to a large extent upon the amount of news etc. generated by club officials, but it is hoped to be at least fortnightly and to provide the type of content that you the clubs could use in your programmes. It is not intended as a vehicle for long and detailed individual match reports, but rather to cover more general newsy items and any interesting or unusual aspects of a match that might otherwise go unreported.

Very importantly, the Newsletter is not intended in any way to replace the excellent Bulletin issued incredibly promptly by Jim Bean every Saturday (and the subsequent midweek updates) but rather as an add-on to the bulletin, hopefully putting a bit of flesh on some of the bones contained therein. Because I spend most Saturday evenings climbing inside a couple of tinnies and a bottle of red wine, I cannot hope to emulate Jim's speed of delivery, but would hope to aim for a Monday / Tuesday delivery.

THE MANAGERIAL MERRY GO ROUND

The grass is green, the lines are freshly marked, the goalposts (hopefully without metal hooks) are gleaming white and the nets are clean and shiny. Yes, it's the start of a brand new season and optimism is running high, but already during the close season Chairmen throughout the league have been sharpening their knives.

According to the Handbook and information filtering through in the last few days, there will be a total of 22 new managers starting the season from the corresponding time a year ago. The position is very different by division, however, with 15 out of 22 clubs in the Premier starting with a new man at the helm. This issue will concentrate on the changes in the Premier Division, with Divisions One and Two reviewed next time.

It is worth recording that the 7 Premier Division clubs who have remained loyal to their managers over the last 12 months are Chalfont St. Peter, Cockfosters, Colney Heath, Harefield, Leverstock Green, Oxhey Jets, and Welwyn Garden City.

Now let's take a look at the changes. Starting in the far west, Aylesbury Vale's new Manager is Steve Glenister, their fourth in the last 3 years. Two seasons ago, Jon Franklyn was in charge, but last season he took over the running of potential ground sharers Aylesbury United. The ground share fell through and, although United only just missed out on the play-offs, Jon Franklyn has returned to the Vale, but on the Committee side.

Just up the road at Tring Corinthians, the management team of Simon Lacey and Jerry Diamond have moved to Holmer Green to assist on the coaching side. Greens manager is Jason Weinrabe, who took over from Richard Mikurenda half way through last season. The new manager at Tring Corinthians is Ross Parret, who has moved on from Chesham United reserves. Incidentally, Parret was in charge at Holmer Green some 4 years ago. Still in Tring, the long serving Management team of Mick Eldridge and Ray Brimson of Tring Athletic, retired at the end of last season after 17 years in charge and have been replaced by Phil Casserly, who joins from Berkhamsted, and who led Hertfordshire side Gossoms End to FA Sunday Cup victory a couple of seasons ago.

Still in the west (ish), relegated Beaconsfield SYCOB begin life back in the Spartan South Midlands with Jamie Jarvis in charge. An ex player at the Rams, he has also played for Burnham, Uxbridge, Maidenhead, Hayes, Grays, Windsor and Slough. Jarvis becomes SYCOB's fifth manager in 9 months, after Simon Delahunty, the duo of Steve Peyton and John Thirkell, and Paul Pitfield.

Just down the A40 towards London, the other relegated club Hanwell Town will kick off the season with ex player Chris Boothe in charge. Boothe replaced the previous management team of Danny Vincent and Pat Gavin towards the end of last season. Near neighbours Ruislip Manor have already had a change from that printed in the Handbook - last years man in charge, Shayne Chandler, has already been replaced by Francis Joseph.

Another last minute change not in the Handbook has occurred at Brimsdown Rovers, where Gordon Boateng, who led Rovers to promotion last season, has opted to join Harlow Town. The new man in charge is Mervin Abraham.

Moving up country, Langford thought they had their new manager in place during pre season when they appointed Phil Childs to replace Roy Boon, but after just two weeks he left to become London Colney's fourth manager in 3 years - guess who Langford have drawn in the FA Cup! Up in the Biggleswade area, Town have retained the services of Chris Nunn, who joined them last season from Newmarket Town, whilst rivals United start a season for the first time for a good few years without Snowy Wright in charge. Nick Burton has taken over the hot seat.

Down at Kingsbury London Tigers, Eddie Cardoso has relinquished the managerial reins to become Secretary, with Valdas Dambraukas becoming the new man in charge. Changes have also occurred very recently at St. Margaretsbury, with ex player Lee Judges taking over this week from Paul Gurney, and becoming the fourth manager in three seasons, whilst at nearby Hertford Town, Dave Greenwood continues the managerial role that he took over half way through last season.

NEWS OF EX-SSMFL MANAGERS

Chesham Utd have installed Andy Lees as their new manager with the task of gaining promotion back up to the Premier division of the BGB Southern League. Chesham endured a fairly torrid time last season under Watford legend Luther Blisset, and are looking to Andy Lees's experience in Non league football at this level to turn around their fortunes. Lees, along with assistant Jon Meekes, cut his managerial teeth with Potters Bar Reserves, before enjoying a successful period at Broxbourne Boro. He then moved into the Ryman League with Cheshunt and BorehamWood, before returning to Potters Bar for the last 18 months or so. Not surprisingly, there have been a number of player changes at Chesham, with quite a few recognizable faces from the Spartan South Midlands now appearing.

Still on the Chesham Utd thread, homeless Aylesbury Utd will be ground sharing with Chesham for the forthcoming season. The new manager at Aylesbury is Tony Thompson, who led Holmer Green to one of their best ever seasons two years ago. Thompson, together with assistants Ken Hollis and Mark Eaton, left to join Jon Franklyn at Aylesbury Utd last season, but following Franklyn's resignation in the summer, are now in sole charge.

Andy Lyne led Oxford City to the SSMFL Premier Division title and promotion to BGB Southern League South and West, but has since moved clubs twice. City found life at the next stage up somewhat more difficult and Lyne moved upstairs to a Director of Football role, relinquishing team affairs to player coach Justin Merritt for a short period before moving on to rivals Didcot Town, again in an advisory role. A certain Ray Spence, well known scourge of SSMFL defences, also moved to Didcot around this time. During the pre season, Andy Lyne has moved back into management with Witney United, one of his former clubs.

If you have any items of SSMFL interest that you would like to share for future issues, please let me know.

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