

MOLTEN SPARTAN SOUTH MIDLANDS FOOTBALL LEAGUE NEWSLETTER No. 13

By Bill Scholes

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Last week was another excellent one for the League in terms of PR coverage, with 2 good items appearing in Sunday's Non League Paper.

Just the three hat tricks in the League on Saturday, with a further three in the B&B Intermediate Cup. Pride of place, again, must go to Ashley Taylor-Forbes, who scored four times for Premier Division Brimsdown Rovers in their 5-2 defeat of Biggleswade Town. The other two league hat tricks were in Division Two, and both for Tring Corinthians. Chris West managed to find the net five times against Markyate, whilst team mate Joynul Hoque weighed in with a further three. In the B&B, there were hat tricks for Jim Horwood of Aston Clinton Darren Dykes of Stony Stratford and Lee Coulter of New Bradwell St. Peter.

PREMIER DIVISION ROUND UP

Brimsdown Rovers are the new leaders of the Premier Division, following their tremendous 5-2 away win at previous leaders **Biggleswade Town**. Once again, Rovers star man was hotshot striker Ashley Taylor - Forbes, who scored a hat trick in the first half hour to effectively seal the game. With Neil Thompson adding a fourth on 40 minutes, it seemed all over, but the Waders did not give in easily, and two goals from Dan Heron and Jamie Steele reduced the deficit to just two goals. It remained thus until the last minute when Taylor-Forbes popped up with his fourth goal of the game, a tremendous game of football, and an excellent advert for the League. **Hanwell Town** passed up the chance to join the Rovers at the top by being held to 1-1 draw away at **Biggleswade United**. Town took an early lead through Dean Scarlett, but Andre Moltoy's equaliser 10 minutes later gave Utd a share of the points. The match between the two clubs in 4th and 5th places resulted in a 2-0 win for **Beaconsfield SYCOB**, away to **Harefield United**. This result enables the Rams to move up into 4th place, replacing their hosts, who drop down to 6th. The first half was a stop/start affair with all three officials keeping themselves busy and numerous niggly fouls preventing a free flowing game. SYCOB's half time team talk must have been good, as within two minutes of the restart they were in front - a handball decision in the area resulting in Stuart Swift's coolly taken penalty. The lead was doubled with 20 minutes left when centre back Dan West rose unmarked at the back post for a well taken goal. The game became rather fractious in the last 20 minutes, resulting in dismissal for Harefield's Adam Willis for alleged use of the elbow, and SYCOB's West for two yellows. Harefield were particularly incensed with the dismissal of Willis, as they felt that Anthony Wright should have been penalised for simulation in attempting to get an opponent sent off., and they were further upset when they felt they were denied a penalty for handball, and the air turned blue with accusations at the final whistle. **Hertford Town** maintained their challenge for honours with a 2-0 home win over **Leverstock Green**, despite having to play the last 60 minutes with 10 men. It was certainly an afternoon to remember for Glen Draper, as he celebrated his 200th game for the Blues, before being dismissed for violent conduct. The 10 men took the lead after 51 minutes when Kevin Cooper's shot from the edge of the box took a wicked deflection to beat Graham Milner in the Green's goal, and strike partner Ryan Redford added the second with 8 minutes left, converting a cross from Phil Goss. Hertford played out the last few minutes with just 9 men, Cooper having to take on the gloves after keeper Robinson was injured. It's been a good week for **St. Margaretsbury**, who have moved up 6 placers to 9th in the table. In midweek they had an excellent 2-1 away win at Brimsdown Rovers, and they followed that up with a 4-1 win at home to **London Colney**. Bury took the lead after just 3 minutes when a low cross from Tony Neilson was turned into the net by the Colney centre back. After 10 minutes, Louis Rose drilled a free kick into the keeper's bottom right corner to put Bury two up. Bury continued to pile on the pressure and won a series of corners before Louis Rose delivered

from the left, John Barker's bullet header shot into the top corner to make it three. Bury were unable to extend the lead and after the Colney keeper clashed heads with Steve Barker it was clear he could not continue after the half time break. London Colney pulled one back mid way through the second half and fully deserved it was. Davey cut in from the right and beat two Bury players before unleashing a shot into the top corner that was simply unstoppable from 25 yards out. London Colney had a good spell with Bury looking tired and dishevelled. But Bury added their fourth when Matt Maskell prodded home from 5 yards after Ben Herod's shot had been partially saved by the reserve keeper. Another team on the up are **Langford**, who won their 5th game on the trot by demolishing **Ruislip Manor** 6-1 at Grosvenor Vale. Langford were quickly into their stride on a nice autumn afternoon in Ruislip, three goals in the opening 27 minutes virtually wrapping up the three points. Wes Byrne bundled home the first on 8 minutes, after the young home keeper, James Christian, saved brilliantly from Walker and Wright rebound hit the post. On 14 minutes, Gary Walker hooked a long ball back from the bye line and Byrne knocked home the second. Langford scored the third on 27 minutes, when Rob Groves picked up a cross-field pass from Walker and drilled a low shot past the 16-year-old keeper. To their credit Ruislip hit back and on the stroke of half time, James Fisher picked up a short corner with the visitors sleeping and fired low past Young. The second half opened with the Manor attacking strongly but it was Langford who scored after a quick break, a fine cross from Rob Groves being side-footed home at the far post by Walker. The visitors keeper, Young, was forced into some fine saves but it was Langford who scored again on 60 minutes, Mark Wright sliding the ball home at the far post after a free kick from Groves. In time added on, Dave Brown scored his first of the season and Langford's sixth of the game with a brilliant diving header from substitute Darren Till's fine cross. Although Ruislip put up a spirited performance, it was Langford's better finishing that was the difference. **Chalfont St. Peter** kept their promotion hopes alive with a 3-0 win away at **Kingsbury London Tigers**. Bradley Bubb put the Saints in front after 20 minutes, Charlie Strutton added a second 7 minutes later, and Bubb notched his second a couple of minutes after the restart to complete the scoring. **Tring Athletic** moved out of the bottom half of the table, with a 2-1 win away at **Oxhey Jets**, and moved above their hosts. Steve Hutchings gave Athletic a short lived lead, which Jamie Arthur cancelled out, but Chris Salmon scored the all important winner 10 minutes after the break. **Aylesbury Vale** returned from their trip to **Cockfosters** with all three points following their 2-1 win. Billy Perry and Daniel Jones put the Vale two up with an hour gone, and Gary Haycock scored a very late consolation goal for the home side. The remaining game in the Division between **Colney Heath** and **Broxbourne Borough** resulted in a 1-1 draw, Mark Blackburne getting the equaliser for Colney after Bradley Drysdale had given Boro the lead.

DIVISION ONE ROUND UP

All change at the top of Division One as last week's leaders **Hoddesdon Town** went down 2-0 at home to **Cheshunt Reserves**, and in so doing, dropped back to third place. New leaders are **Haringey Borough** who struggled somewhat to beat lowly **Cranfield United** 3-2 at home. Ronardson Odinna, with two, and Chima Obiji were the scorers for Boro, whilst Alistair Shearer continued his goal scoring record with another brace for the visitors. Moving silkily up two places into second spot are **Sport London e Benfica**, who just edged out visitors **Amptill Town** 2-1, thanks to a last gasp goal from Abdikharim Muse. Edgar Sa Dasilva had given Benfica an early lead, which was cancelled out by Stuart Reynolds just after the half hour mark, and it looked like ending all square until Muse popped up at the last minute. **Brache Sparta** dropped out of the top three following their 3-1 reverse away at **Arlesey Athletic**, this after Darren Edwards had given them a 9th minute lead from the penalty spot. Athletic equalised with a penalty of their own from Adam Furness, Wayne Blows put them in the lead shortly after and Furness scored his second with 8 minutes left to make the game safe. Two late goals from Chris Jones saw **Harpenden Town** win 2-0 at home to a depleted **Bedford Town Reserves** side, whilst a Ben Poulton goal after 15 minutes was enough to see **Sun Sports Postal** to a 1-0 win over **Bedford**. **Kentish Town** and **Buckingham Athletic** shared the 4 goals in their 2-2 draw, all goals coming in the first half.

DIVISION TWO ROUND UP

Kings Langley remain in top spot following their hard fought 3-2 win away to second from bottom **Padbury United**. Leading 1-0 at half time through Gary Clarke, to goals from James Cracknell in as many minutes just after half time seemed to have the game sewn up, but Padbury fought back with goals from Ian Fraser and Jamie Davies to give the leaders an uncomfortable last few minutes. The clash between second placed **Kent Athletic** and third placed **AFC Dunstable** was settled by a James McCarthy goal for Dunstable after 79 minutes, propelling them up into second place and dropping Kent back to fourth. **Crawley Green**, thanks to a second half brace from Peter O'Donnell, beat **Caddington** 2-1 and leapfrog over Kent into 5th place. The only other game in Division Two saw **Tring Corinthians** beat luckless **Markyate** 9-0 with 5 goals from Chris West, 3 from Joynul Hoque and a single from Luke Byrne

CHALLENGE TROPHY – SECOND ROUND

There were just the two games on Saturday, played on grounds without floodlights. **The 61FC** acquitted themselves very well, defeating Division One side **Royston Town**, 2-0, but no such luck for **Totternhoe** who lost 6-0 to Premier Division **Holmer Green**.

BERKS & BUCKS INTERMEDIATE CUP - SECOND ROUND

There were the usual mismatches and high scores in the early round of the B&B, with 4 SSMFL sides making it through to the next round. Definitely through, and competing in the next round are..... Aston Clinton, Pitstone & Ivinghoe, Stony Stratford and New Bradwell St. Peter

Bob Flight was out and about in North Bucks....

Mursley United 0, Stony Stratford Town 8

The early kick off in the Berks & Bucks Intermediate Cup saw Mursley entertain visitors from Stony Stratford. Those neutrals in the crowd half expected an upset given the patchy recent performances of Stony Stratford. However, nothing could have been further from the truth as Stony massacred Mursley 8-0. The home team took almost twenty minutes to get going but found themselves already two goals down. The Mursley tactic of playing a flat back four and holding a high line played right into Stony's hands as their fast moving attack cut the Mursley defence to shreds. The half time scoreline of 0-6 told the sorry tale. If the watching Stony supporters expected a goal avalanche in the second half they were disappointed, as to their credit Mursley played neat football and could even have scored on a couple of occasions. However, despite Stony missing a penalty - saved by keeper Ben Donaldson, and few other chances, they completed the rout by scoring two goals in the final ten minutes of the match with Darren Dykes completing his hat-trick. Mursley battled well, but they were seriously outclassed.

The kind invitation from Bob Dixon at Mursley enabled me to view the recent improvements the Club had made to their facilities. The pitch was relayed during the close season to remove the undulations and even in November the pitch looked perfect. The playing surface must now be one of the best in the League. Complementing the pitch, two new goals and nets were also erected. Next to the Clubhouse and pitch, an all weather floodlight 5-A-side court has been erected so that the club can hold training sessions in comfort. The court can also host tennis and other sports. With these improvements, together with the friendly welcome, makes any visit to Mursley a pleasure.

Winslow United 0, Olney Town 4

The early kick off at Mursley allowed me to hop across to Winslow to catch the final few minutes of the first half and all of the second. On arrival, I was informed by Winslow Secretary Dave Ward that they were already two goals down. The second half was no better for Winslow as the UCL Division One side scored twice more - one a penalty, to comfortably wrap up the match. Whilst Winslow had

little luck in front of goal as their shots were saved or blocked and one hit the inside of a post and amazingly bounced out, Olney Town were far too strong and well organised and deserved their win.

MANAGERIAL CHANGES

Change in the hot seat at Haringey Borough who have secured the services of one of Non League footballs' high profile Managers - Allan Fenn - who brought great success to Ilford and has also managed Redbridge FC after an impressive playing career at many levels including spells at Barnet and Dagenham & Redbridge.

RIP – FRANCIS “ROBBIE” BURNS of HERTFORD TOWN 1926-2007

Before the kick off at Hertingfordbury Park against Leverstock Green, Hertford Town FC remembered former skipper Robbie Burns, who passed away recently. A minute's silence was observed for the man who made a record 800+ appearances for the Town in the 1950s 60s and 70s. His funeral will be held on the 8th of November at Our Lady Queen of Apostle church in Woodhall Lane, Welwyn Garden City at 11am. Robbie made his 250th consecutive appearance for the Blues in season 1963-64, a sequence started at Marlow back in 1958 at the age of 32. At the end of December 1965, he suffered a knee injury that brought to an end a truly remarkable run of over 320 consecutive first team appearances for the popular player. With ligament problems diagnosed it would be March before he returned to action. Robbie would in fact play on to complete a 20-year playing career with Hertford and clock up well over 800 appearances for the club. A testimonial match was played against West Ham in April 1975 to mark the 20 years of loyal service that Robbie had given to the club. He had joined the club from Enfield as an inside left but soon moved to the left back position and took over the captaincy of the first eleven in 1954. Robbie had played representative games for the RAF side during the war and had trials with Portsmouth after the war ended. He also appeared for both the Spartan and Delphian League representative sides during his playing career and was the most successful player and captain ever to play for Hertford Town FC and a very popular personality too. In the 1966-67 season Robbie led the club to its first win in the Herts Senior Cup, winning 5-4 on aggregate in a two legged final against Boreham Wood and it was a very proud Robbie Burns who received the trophy from Mr. G. C. Sanderson President of the Herts FA at the end of the game.

MYSTIC MICK EWEN – THE LEGEND LIVES ON Or has Final Score Betting finally reached the SSMFL?

Following Mick's recent foresight in allocating four officials for a game when the referee went down injured and the reserve assistant referee came on to run the line, he was again in good form last Saturday when Biggleswade Town played Brimsdown Rovers. Having told everyone that Portsmouth would beat Newcastle away for the first time since 1949, he then quite confidently predicted the final score for this top of the table clash at half-time with Brimsdown leading 4-0. Even with less than a minute on the clock left of the match and the score at 2-4, he smiled knowingly as Brimsdown broke away to score their fifth goal in the final seconds to make the final score 2-5.

Congratulations to Mike Taylor for his excellent article which appeared in The Non league Paper on Sunday, but also apologies to the same gentleman as his article on the role of Assessors has had to be held over to next week. – I know you can't wait!

Many thanks to all contributors

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