

MOLTEN SPARTAN SOUTH MIDLANDS FOOTBALL LEAGUE

NEWSLETTER No. 14

By *Bill Scholes*

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Just the three hat tricks this week, and two of those coming from one team. Hanwell Town's Charlie Baverstock and Jason Tucker both scored three goals as they defeated Oxhey Jets, and in Division Two Danny Sunderland scored three for Kent Athletic.

PREMIER DIVISION ROUND UP

Brimsgate Rovers, the League leaders at the start of the day, were knocked off their perch as they were held to a pulsating 1-1 draw away at **Leverstock Green**. Both sides fielded forward lines that promised a goalfest, but as often happens it didn't quite work out that way. It was a game of penalties, two given and, according to the highly vocal home crowd, three that were not. Apparently one was so blatant that even a guy who was in the loo saw it!! It was a great game for the neutrals – end to end, with plenty of goalmouth action, but the final finish, from both sides, was lacking. Both goals came in the last 20 minutes; the first from Brimsgate when they broke away down the slope and Neil Thompson was brought down. Scott Atkinson coolly despatched the resultant penalty. With time running out, James Armstrong was brought down in the opposing box and Mickey Swainsland thumped the spot kick home. All in all, a fair result. With the Rovers dropping two points, **Biggleswade Town** went back to the top of the pile with an excellent 2-1 win away at **Beaconsfield SYCOB**. The Waders were determined to put last week's defeat by Brimsgate behind them, and quickly roared into a two-goal lead with strikes from Keith Thomas and Dan Heron. Aaron Lennon pulled one back for SYCOB before the break, and the Waders were indebted to keeper Aaron Springham for two marvellous last minute saves that ensured all three points and a return to the top. **Hanwell Town** remain in third place after shooting down **Oxhey Jets** by 7-1. Town had two hat trick heroes in Charlie Baverstock and Jason Tucker, with Victor Osobu weighing in with a single, whilst Luke Lloyd got the Jets' sole reply just after half time. Fourth place **Harefield United** returned from **St. Margaretsbury** with a 1-0 win, thanks to a Sean Sonner goal just after half time and **Hertford Town** kept up the pressure on the leaders with a hard fought 4-3 win away at **Langford**. It was the home side who took the lead when Mark Wright thumped home a shot from the edge of the box after 6 minutes, and Hertford had to wait until almost the half hour mark before Pablo Ardiles stabbed home from close range to equalise. Just before the break, scorer turned provider for Phil Goss to give Blues the lead. Kevin Cooper extended the lead with a penalty after 62 minutes and Ardiles got his second, and Blues fourth, a few minutes later. Langford were not finished however, and a towering header from Wright, and a last minute effort from Robert Groves had Hertford hanging on desperately. A very even game between two well matched sides took place at The Grass Roots Stadium, but based on the old adage of he who scores more goals wins, **Tring Athletic** triumphed over **Welwyn Garden City** by 3 goals to one. Just 5 minutes had been played before Mark Burfoot gave Athletic the lead when he volleyed into the top corner – no more goals before the break, but 3 cautions, all dissent, for Athletic, including Manager Phil Casserly who was dismissed from the dug out. Four minutes after half time, Dan Griggs equalised for the Citizens, but almost immediately Tring were back in front thanks to Phil Otum. Sub Darren Caseman got the third with a mazy run and clinical finish with just 10 left on the clock. **Cockfosters** were hoping that their game away at rock bottom **London Colney** would give them a welcome respite from their woeful home record, and so it seemed as Dave Pigden put them two up in the first 25 minutes. The visitors remained on top, but without adding to their total, and were surprised in the second half as the Blue Boys, again under new management, came much more into the game and although they pulled one back with a looping header from Anthony Mutashamay, they could not find the equaliser, leaving Cockfosters with a

slightly more hard fought 2-1 win than anticipated. There were four goals scored in the **Chalfont St. Peter v Ruislip Manor** game, and although the Manor were responsible for three of them, two were in their own net! Bradley Bubb opened the scoring for the Saints after 26 minutes but Michael Walker brought the Manor back on level terms just after the break. However, two own goals from John Christian and Todd Allinson in the last 20 minutes gave Chalfont the 3-1 win, and importantly, with their games in hand, kept them in touch with the leaders. Marco Tagbasrumi of **Kingsbury London Tigers** scored the quickest goal of the day in the first minute of their away game at **Broxbourne Borough**. Unfortunately that was the end of their scoring as Boro ran out 3-1 winners with Junior Lansbury, Danny Ward, and Gasmin Dauti all on target. **Holmer Green** raced into a two goal lead inside 12 minutes in their home game with **Biggleswade United** - both goalscorers were Williams, but not brothers – James being a defender and scoring with his head, and Simon a striker scoring with his feet, but were unable to maintain the momentum, and Robbie O'Dell pulled one back after 34 minutes. The visitors created numerous chances in the second half, but had to rely on Liam McDevitt's 74th minute penalty for a share of the spoils. In the division's only other game, **Aylesbury Vale** maintained their 8th place with a 1-0 home win over **Colney Heath**, thanks to Ricky Sinfield's 18th minute goal, whilst at the same time keeping Colney in the bottom three.

On Monday night, **Beaconsfield SYCOB** and **Chalfont St. Peter** shared the honours in a 1-1 draw, which leaves both clubs one point better off, but with no change in league positions.

DIVISION ONE ROUND UP

All change at the top of the table, as **Hoddesdon Town** go back on top following their 2-0 away win at **Arlesey Athletic**. Andy Martin in the first half, and Shaun Dyer in the second, got the goals. **Bedford's** 5-3 win over **Winslow United** was their second in a week, and moved them up from 6th to 2nd place. Dean Flanagan's own goal put Bedford behind before they came back with goals from Mark Kenneford (2) and Paul Lawrence to lead 3-1 at the break. In the second half Winslow pulled one back through Gary Acheapong, had a man sent off and then netted a penalty from Ryan Wiffin to make it 3-3 before Darek Jozwiak saved Bedford's blushes with two (very) late goals. Previous leaders Haringey Borough, with no game, dropped back to third as local rivals **Kentish Town** moved up three places to 4th with a 1-0 win over **Sport London e Benfica**, who had been in second place at the start of the day. Town's sole goal came from a free kick by Thomas Looney just after half time. **Chesham Reserves'** 8 game unbeaten run came to an end, as they were surprisingly beaten 2-0 at home by **Buckingham Athletic**, Jason Benjafield and Andrew Bennett doing the damage in the second half. **Amptill Town's** game against old rivals **New Bradwell St. Peter** saw a pulsating 3-3 draw. Bradwell started like an express train and from a free kick, Michael Downard unmarked, headed the ball against the Amptill crossbar and from the rebound Dave Cole swept the ball into the net. Worse was to follow for the home team when Greg Tite's shot was deflected past the keeper to put the visitors two goals up. Amptill had another escape as Tite missed a penalty kick when Craig Townsend saved the shot with his legs. With Bradwell seemingly coasting along, a poor back pass allowed Martin Wells to intercept the ball but bravely, Peter's keeper Tom Kennard dived to block the shot only to dislocate his shoulder in the process. Following a long delay, centre forward Downard took the keeper's jersey and Kevin Hyde came off the bench. This was a turning point in the game and after 34 minutes Amptill scored as Wells hit home from close range against the stand-in keeper. The second half saw Bradwell move further ahead as a superb pass from Hyde put Lea Coulter through and he shot inside the near post. Amptill battled and reduced the arrears on 65 minutes when an unmarked Wells headed in from a corner kick. It was now end to end stuff and Bradwell had several chances to secure the match but a combination of a shot cleared off the line and a couple of bad misses gave Amptill hope. With the time tuning out Amptill scored their important third goal from the penalty spot after Reynolds was brought down. Reynolds picked himself up to drive the ball past a despairing Downard to square the game. Ecstatic new manager Craig Connell saw **Cranfield United** climb out of the relegation zone as they beat **Amersham Town** 5-2 at home. Jack Goodacre's 43rd minute goal put Cranfield ahead but Amersham equalised moments later

through Martin Loakes. Alistair Shearer and Goodacre quickly put Cranfield two goals ahead immediately after the Jaffa break, and although Jude Thomas reduced the arrears for Town, Shearer again and Vasco Diaz completed the victory. **Harpenden Town's** mini revival came to an end, losing 2-0 away at second from bottom **Sun Postal Sports** and they drop back into the bottom two, as fellow strugglers Cranfield, and **Bedford Town Reserves** both moved up. The latter drew 1-1 with **Stony Stratford Town**, whilst early front-runners **Brache Sparta** slipped further back as they lost 3-1 at home to bottom club **Royston Town**. The Crows scorers were Brett Perkins, Andrew Stokes, and an OG, whilst Andrzej Juraszek replied for Brache.

DIVISION TWO ROUND UP

No change in the top two placings of Division Two. **Kings Langley** remain on top following their 1-0 win at home to **Aston Clinton**. Goalscoring hero, after 10 minutes of the second half, was Ben Walker. A very competitive and hard fought game between two skilful sides, and well marshalled by the three officials. Second placed **AFC Dunstable** had to wait for two thirds of their game with **Padbury United**, before securing a good 4-0 home win. Although Gary Ellerton gave the home side a three-minute lead, it was not until the last half hour that Craig Butler, John Cooper, and Kevin Taylor scored the remaining three goals. **Kent Athletic** are back up to third following their comprehensive 6-1 home defeat of **Totternhoe**. Steve Justin and Junior George put Athletic 2-0 up, but the visitors pulled one back through Gary Simpson just before the break. However, the home side piled on the pressure in the second half, and a Danny Sunderland hat trick, plus a single from Steve Atkinson, confirmed Kent's position as the League's leading goalscorers. **Crawley Green** slipped a place as they salvaged a 2-2 draw at home to **Pitstone & Ivinghoe**, thanks to a last gasp Danny Watson goal. Earlier, Tom Freeman had put Crawley into the lead, but two, second half goals from Adam Rees and Danny Ripley seemed to secure all three points for Pitstone. **Caddington** went into a two goal lead at home to **Old Bradwell United** with two first half goals from Daniel Edwards and Ryan Powell, before the much travelled Grant Carney scored the third in the second half to wrap up the 3-0 win. Luckless **Markyate's** continued search for their first points goes on, as they were beaten 3-1 away to **Mursley United**. The bottom club did have a glimmer of hope as they opened the scoring through Daniel Fleming, but a brace from Martin Shaw and a singleton from Brian Nixon extinguished their hopes. Finally Risborough Rangers, who defeated Tring Corinthians 2-0 with second half goals from Robbie Morgan and Andy Herd, won the local derby out west.

MANAGERIAL CHANGE

London Colney had a new management team on Saturday – the fourth this season- as they looked to arrest their recent slide in the Premier Division. **Vince Rickard** and former Colney player **Jim Franklin** stepped into the managerial hot seat to lead the club on Saturday at home to Cockfosters. Rickard and Franklin have been working hard to bring in new players, and they are likely to be backed by a new regime running the club, with more changes to be announced.

A LIGHT AT THE END OF ROYSTON TOWN'S TUNNEL?

Royston Town Football Club's long-running hopes to develop a new ground have been given a boost - four years after it was initially rejected. After years of research and consultation the club believed it had found a suitable site on the land adjacent to the Little Chef on the north side of Baldock Road at Ivy Farm. However, in November 2003 the club's dreams were dashed when an inspector's 36-page report put the project in jeopardy and as a result it was rejected by the Office of the then Deputy Prime Minister. Now the club have been given a glimmer of hope after North Herts District Council's Local Development Framework highlighted a possible site highlighting the undeveloped land beyond the Royston industrial estate. The council's document stated that sites outside existing "settlement boundaries" could be developed. The document said: "One example of this is Royston Town Football

Club where we envisage allocating a site to enable it to expand in a way that the current site in Garden Walk does not allow. Club President Alan Barlow said the document was a positive step and believes it has recognised the club's need to move from its current Garden Walk home, which is in desperate need of renovation.

There are a number of our clubs who are either planning a move to a new ground, or are making major improvements to their existing ground - if you are one of these clubs please email me with details – more news to follow shortly.

As promised last week, below is Mike Taylor's excellent article on the role of the Assessor, which hopefully will go some way to dispel the doubts and worries that some club officials have when the Assessor hoves into view through their turnstiles.

THE MANAGER, THE ASSESSOR AND THE REFEREE

By Mike Taylor

Chairman: Association of Spartan South Midlands Football League Match Officials

An Everyday Story of Football Folk

If truth be told there are many in our midst that believe that the appearance of the Match Assessor causes all sorts of mayhem and havoc to a Referee's performance. Why should this be I wonder? Well, perhaps it could be just a question of education and mutual understanding. Many years ago, one of the main attributes a Referee could display was euphemistically called 'Man Management' and there were many match officials who displayed this skill particularly adroitly and were duly promoted to higher levels. Some of course, just like players and managers, were not quite so good and so the cry for 'Consistency' echoed around the football fields of England (and probably the rest of the world). Because Refereeing is all about opinions, as it has been since the game was first played, people will always argue over the rights and wrongs of each decision and often fail to agree among themselves. This also happens at the highest level, even with numerous television cameras positioned around the ground. In the hope of developing consistent reactions to similar misdemeanours, FIFA instigated what has been termed 'Mandatory Cautions', which ALL referees SHOULD deal with in an identical and consistent manner. For example, dissent of course, by word or action, punished by a caution, seems to increase the blood pressure of those involved in club management, but the reality is that it should not come as a great shock to those being punished, after all it is now standard practice (i.e. Consistent). There are many other instances that I could describe to illustrate my point, but the principles are just the same.

Enter then the Assessor

Assessors have watched referees since the first time they applied for promotion, so it should not come as a great shock to anyone on our League when the Assessor turns up to watch one of your games. The primary function of the Assessor is not to prevent the Referee from performing the way he normally does, but to subjectively analyse the performance and highlight areas both good and bad. Much the same as a manager would do with his players. From the start of this season, the Assessor will also be monitoring the performance of the Assistant Referees (Linos to you and I). If the Assessor notices areas where an improvement could be made, he will point out the shortcomings to the Match Official(s) for them to consider. The FA, throughout Level 5 football in England, although not unique to our League, is promoting this scheme, and they have made financial contributions towards the running of the scheme. The Molten Spartan South Midlands FL was at the forefront of this idea and the template that we created is now being mirrored elsewhere. The experience and knowledge of the Assessors on our League is undoubtedly as good as it gets at this level and ultimately should benefit us all.

Please keep all news / views / items of interest coming to billscholes@hotmail.co.uk

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