

## MOLTEN SPARTAN SOUTH MIDLANDS LEAGUE

### NEWSLETTER No.24

*By Bill Scholes*

SATURDAY 19<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2008

**Game, set and match to the weather. A complete wet-wash for all of the league fixtures, with just Harefield United and Stony Stratford Town managing to beat the weather in their respective Cup games. With rain lashing down, I gave up trying to find a game to watch and contented myself with the armchair and watching a DVD of Sussex's late run to the Count Championship last year. The sun was out, the sky was blue, and I even managed to spot myself relaxing in a deck chair – Oh, happy days!**

#### FA Carlsberg VASE FOURTH ROUND

**Harefield United**, away to **Greenwich Borough**, bowed out of the FA Vase, succumbing to a goal deep into added on time as they went down 2-1. The first half was played at a fast and furious pace with the home side having the better of the exchanges, but Harefield took the lead against the run of play with a Sean Sonner header from a free kick. Greenwich had to wait until the hour mark to get back on terms, which they did with a Joseph Ogoo free kick and, in the 8<sup>th</sup> minute of added time, Badar Mohammad headed home a corner to eliminate the Spartan South Midlands League's last remaining representative and put Borough into the last 16, where they will visit Hellenic League side Hungerford Town.

#### BERKS & BUCKS INTERMEDIATE CUP FOURTH ROUND

The Berks & Bucks 4th Round Intermediate Cup tie between **Stony Stratford Town** and **Olney Town** was played at the third time of asking, due only to the match being switched from a waterlogged Ostlers Lane to East Street, Olney. On a pitch best described as soft to heavy, Olney had all the early pressure and the Stony defence lived dangerously at times. However Olney were very profligate in front of goal and Stony escaped. As the half wore on, Stony began to dominate and scored on 19 minutes when a Ben Hill free kick was weakly punched out by the keeper straight to Darren Dykes who blasted the ball home from close range. Stony went further ahead on 38 minutes when a cross from Gary Hutchinson was headed powerfully home at the far post by Dykes. The second half was mostly Olney as they strived to cut the arrears but poor finishing let them down time and again. The match however was marred in the 75th minute following a bad tackle by a Stony defender which saw a melee of players, substitutes and officials from both sides right in front of the main stand. Order was restored and the referee pulled both managers aside to issue a strict warning as to the future conduct of all concerned. Thankfully, commonsense prevailed and the remainder of the match passed off without incident. Stony managed to comfortably hold out and now go into the Quarter Final draw.

#### SPARTAN SOUTH MIDLAND CLUBS IN THE COUNTY CUPS

As most of you are aware, SSMFL clubs compete within 5 different County FA Cups, and indeed some clubs, having dual County registrations, compete in more than one. Drawing comparisons across Counties is very difficult, as each County have their own qualification requirements, but I thought I would try and summarise the latest situation within the various County Cup competitions as they relate to SSMFL clubs.

#### Bedfordshire FA

The Beds Senior Cup has reached the Quarter Final stage, and our sole representative in the last 8 is Langford, who are drawn away to Stotfold, one of two clubs from the United Counties league. Of the other 5 clubs, four are Step 4 and one is Step 3.

The Beds Senior Trophy is contested by clubs from Step 6 and below and we have three out of the four Semi-finalists; Arlesey Athletic are at home to AFC Dunstable, whilst Kent Athletic host Caldecote from the Herts Senior league.

The Beds Intermediate Cup seems to be for Reserve sides only, and 6 out of the 8 Quarter finalists are from our Reserve Divisions. They are Cranfield United, AFC Dunstable, Ampthill Town, Crawley Green, The 61FC and Biggleswade United.

#### Berks & Bucks FA

The B&B Senior Cup is only for Step 4 clubs and above, so we have no entrants.

The B&B Senior Trophy is for clubs at Step 5 level, and we had 3 representatives, - Beaconsfield SYCOB, Chalfont St. Peter and Holmer Green at the Quarter Final stage. Holmer Green narrowly lost 1-0 last week to Milton United, who will now visit Beaconsfield SYCOB, who last night (Tuesday) beat Sandhurst Town 2-0. Beaconsfield were taken to extra time by their hosts, who are struggling in the Combined Counties League, but two very late goals in the last two minutes of extra time, by Anthony Wright and Stuart Swift, saw them through to the Semi Finals. Chalfont St. Peter hosted Reading Town, also struggling in the Combined Counties League, on Tuesday and made hard work of their 2-1 victory. Again it was two late goals that sealed victory, after Reading had taken a well deserved lead through Laith Aldoori just after the hour mark and looked to be heading for the Semi-Finals before Daniel Hughes equalised in the 86<sup>th</sup> minute, and Ray Walsh squeezed home the winner right on the stroke of full time. Heartbreak for Reading Town, but they must surely move away from the relegation zone with impressive performances like this. One recognizable face on view was the Reading centre forward, Ray Spence, well known to SSMFL defences from his time at Oxford City two years ago. Spence has been playing for Farnborough Town this season, but was released a few weeks ago. Chalfont now have a home tie in the Semi-Final against either Newport Pagnell Town or Flackwell Heath, whose game was postponed last night.

The B&B Intermediate Cup is contested by Step 6 and 7 clubs, but can include Reserve sides of Step 4 and 5 clubs. There is a huge entry for this competition, with 64 ties in the First Round and only one of our clubs, Stony Stratford Town, made it through to the Quarter Finals where they will host Binfield, from Hellenic Division One East.

#### Hertfordshire F.A.

Herts Senior Cup: This Cup is open to all senior clubs within the County who compete at Step 5 level and above. Currently at the Quarter Final stage, there were two SSMFL clubs still in the draw – unfortunately Tring Athletic lost on Tuesday night 1-0 at home to Borehamwood, leaving Broxbourne Borough V&E, away to Bishops Stortford, as the last remaining SSMFL club. Of the remaining 6 clubs, 2 are from Step 4, two from Step 3, one from Step 2, and 1 Football League club. Herts Senior Trophy: Open to clubs at Step 6 level and those competing in Herts County League – to quote from the Herts FA website; to enable “second tier” clubs in the County to gain senior status. Again there are two SSMFL clubs in the Quarter finals – both have been drawn away, Hoddesdon Town to Wormley Rovers and Harpenden Town to Bovingdon. The other remaining 6 clubs are all from the Herts County league.

Herts Intermediate Cup: Bit of a mixed bag here, but there are three SSMFL Reserve teams left at the last 16 stage – Leverstock Green, Broxbourne Borough V&E and Hertford Town.

#### Middlesex County FA

Middlesex Senior Cup: No SSMFL clubs left at Quarter Final stage.

Middlesex Senior Charity Cup: Harefield United are through to the Quarter Finals and they will now be joined by Hanwell Town, who overcame a tricky away tie against Harrow Borough on Tuesday night to win 3-2.

Middlesex Premier Cup: No SSMFL clubs left at Semi-Final stage – all Step 3 or 4 clubs.

Middlesex Intermediate Cup: No SSMFL clubs at Quarter Final stage.

#### London FA

London Senior Cup: Four SSMFL clubs did enter, including two Step 6 clubs, but none left at Quarter Final stage.

London Intermediate Cup: No SSMFL clubs left at Quarter Final stage.

## TITTLE TATTLE

Gordon Boateng, who managed Brimsdown Rovers to promotion last season, and who recently parted company with Harlow Town, was last week appointed as Manager of troubled Cheshunt – their 5<sup>th</sup> this season. The previous manager, Martin Grainger, lasted just one game, but his assistants, Justin Moseley and Kevin Dear, who had been in charge of Cheshunt's reserve team, will continue to assist the new manager.

## MOLTEN SPORTS TEAM OF THE MONTH – DECEMBER

Congratulations go to Royston Town, who were awarded the Molten Sports Team of the Month accolade for December, and they will be presented with their Golden Ball by League President Brian Smith and Molten Sports representative, Andy Passman, on Saturday before their home game with New Bradwell St. Peter.

## RISBOROUGH RANGERS – ANDY PEEL – OBITUARY

I received the following email today (Tuesday) from Nick Bishop – General Secretary and Reserve Team manager of Risborough Rangers.

“I am writing to let you know that we had some more Bad news at Risborough Rangers on Saturday. Following the death of the Reserve Team Goalkeeper Jason Travers last month from Cancer at the age of 25, my club mate, good friend and Reserve Team Assistant Manager, Andy Peel, died early Saturday morning in the St John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford following an operation to remove a tumour from his brain. He was 37 and leaves a wife and two young Children. The club are numb with shock to lose not one, but two players and our thoughts and Heartfelt Sympathy go out to Andy's wife and family. As far as I can remember, Andy has been at the club for at least fifteen years and has been my assistant for the last two seasons. This season was the first time he hasn't played, as he felt the quality of players we had coming through the club did not warrant him playing, which was typical of him, very unselfish.

He was a terrific player, great clubman and had a brilliant dry sense of humour. Both I and the club will miss him greatly.”

The Spartan South Midlands Football League would like to send their condolences to both Andy Peel's family, and to Risborough Rangers FC.

## PREMIER DIVISION – TUESDAY 22<sup>nd</sup> JANUARY

Just two League games played on Tuesday and, although neither affected the battle at the top, **Aylesbury Vale**, who had slipped down into the bottom half of the table, leapt up four places to 8<sup>th</sup> spot, courtesy of their 4-2 home win over **Biggleswade United**. It was level pegging at 1-1 at half time, but three second half goals in a five minute blitz put the Vale firmly in the driving seat, before Utd pulled one back. This win keeps Vale on the coat tails of the leading seven clubs. In the other game, **London Colney** remain rooted to the foot of the table after their 2-0 home defeat by Kingsbury London Tigers. Who are starting to put daylight between themselves and the relegation battle.

## RUISLIP MANOR FC

With the entire management committee resigning last week, Ruislip Manor have been excused boots by the League for a two week period in order for them to try and recruit new officers to run the club. The two week period of grace includes last week's game against Langford and this week's game at home to Biggleswade Town.

**Many thanks to our contributors - please keep all news /views / items of interest coming to [billscholes@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:billscholes@hotmail.co.uk) Bill Scholes**