

MOLTEN SPARTAN SOUTH MIDLANDS LEAGUE

NEWSLETTER No.27

By Bill Scholes

THE MIDWEEK RACE FOR THE TITLE

The race for the Premier Division title is beginning to hot up and three of the top four sides were in action during the week. Leaders **Chalfont St. Peter** did no harm whatsoever to their goal difference, as they enjoyed an emphatic 6-1 home win over **Kingsbury London Tigers**. The Saints have now extended their unbeaten run to 19 games – the last time they tasted defeat was back in mid-October. Torrential rain around the western Home Counties made for a difficult playing surface and difficult playing conditions but Chalfont were so quick out their blocks that the watching Mick Ewen barely had time to have more than two puffs of his fag. Two strikes, in the first minute from Bradley Bubb and in the second minute from Terrell Lewis, gave the Saints a dream start, but Kingsbury did not fold and slowly worked their way back into the game and deservedly reduced the deficit in the 13th minute through Renars Zarchenko. The Tigers continued to match the league leaders, but half time arrived with no further goals. Another two goal burst in two minutes however, not long after the restart, put the Saints firmly back in control – Bubb holding off several defenders before firing past Kambila for his second and Toby Francis, always foraging down the right, finished off a slick passing move with aplomb. Bubb completed his hat trick five minutes later, and rounded off a personal triumph by adding his fourth, and Chalfont's sixth, 15 minutes later. Full marks to Kingsbury, who never gave up and continued to try and play football right to the end – all that was missing was the cutting edge shown by the home side. **Beaconsfield SYCOB** kept in touch with the leaders, following their 3-2 away win at **Aylesbury Vale**. This was the Rams sixth win on the trot, and unbeaten in 14, but they had to do it the hard way, coming back from a 2-0 deficit at half time. Vale took the lead through an OG from Aaron Taylor- Ives after 16 minutes and Ricky Sinfield scrambled home the second from a corner just before the break .The second half belonged to Beaconsfield – a Mickey Swaysland header reduced the deficit, Aaron Lennon got the equaliser, and a Stuart Swift rocket gave them the lead. Reduced to 10 men following an injury to Steve Dell, all subs having been used, Beaconsfield held on to claim all three points and move into third place on the night. It was a position that they only held for a day, however, as **Biggleswade Town** were in action on Wednesday night at home to **Colney Heath**, but they needed a last minute goal to move back up to second place and push Beaconsfield back to fourth. For a change, it was a warm night for watching and Biggleswade was soon peppering the Colney Heath goal, but when the attacks broke down, Colney Heath looked very dangerous on the break. In the 13th minute, the Waders had the chance to go ahead when they were awarded a penalty but the Colney keeper made a good save from Dan Heron to keep the score to 0 - 0. Play continued end to end and it was difficult to tell which team was in the top half of the table and which in the bottom half. In the 28th minute, the visitors took the lead when Ashley Aimakoo headed in from close range from a corner. In the 50th minute, Colney went 2 - 0 up when Martin Standen hit a first time shot from outside the box leaving the Waders keeper with no chance. However, within 2 minutes, Biggleswade pulled a goal back when Dan Heron cracked in a superb effort from 18 yards and, six minutes later, they were level when Jack Weeden smashed home a shot from 20 yards. Play continued end to end and it looked like a draw was going to be the final score, but with time running out Biggleswade threw almost everyone into their opponent's box. From a long throw, the ball was headed on and turned into the goal by Weedon, for his second of the night and to make the final score 3-2. A cruel blow to Colney Heath who battled well all night, but for Biggleswade, it puts them on 58 points and level with Chalfont St. Peter.

SATURDAY 9th FEBRUARY 2008

There were 3 hat trick heroes on Saturday. In the Premier, Joe Delaselle of Langford scored three, and in Division One, it was Ry Hardy of Haringey Boro and, surprise, it was that man Craig Hammond of Royston Town. Incidentally, this was Hammond's fifth hat trick in nine games since joining Royston in November.

PREMIER DIVISION ROUND UP

After this latest round of games, the top four have now opened up a gap of seven points between themselves and the chasing pack, and it is beginning to look realistically as though the new champions will come from these four. Leaders **Chalfont St. Peter** made it 20 games unbeaten as they recorded their fifth win on the trot, away to **Oxhey Jets** 4-2. Lee Togwell, back from injury, gave the Saints a very early lead, but the Jets came back with a brace from Paul Danslow to put them in front early in the second half. Chalfont responded well to this setback, and two quick goals from Bradley Bubb and the final killer goal from Jerome Okimo just before the end sealed all three points to keep them top of the pile. **Biggleswade Town** remain hot on their heels with the same number of points as they came away from **Holmer Green** with a 3-0 victory. The home side's attack never really looked like troubling the visitors and Dan Heron gave the Waders the lead just before the break when he was left with a simple tap in from a Jack Weeden cross. Scott Field doubled the lead with a rasping drive on 70 minutes and Jamie Steele out jumped the Holmer defence to head home the third. This was the Waders fourth consecutive victory, and they now appear to be over their hiccup over the Xmas period when they only took four points from 4 games. Just three points behind come Brimsdown Rovers and **Beaconsfield SYCOB**, and the latter had Mickey Swaysland to thank for their sole goal after 23 minutes as they struggled to overcome bottom club **London Colney** 1-0. In doing so, they recorded their fifth consecutive league win to remain unbeaten in 15 games. **Aylesbury Vale** gave Beaconsfield a bit of a fright in mid week, but could not repeat the performance as they went down 3-0 at home to **Brimsdon Rovers**. Reece Prestidge gave the Rovers a half time lead, and Ashley Taylor-Forbes and Scott Atkinson added two more, late in the second half. **Harefield United** are beginning to lose touch with the leading four, and their hopes took a nosedive as they were beaten 3-0 away to **Leverstock Green**. The home side are another on a long unbeaten run – of 13 games, and they took the lead almost straight from the kick off as they forced a corner which was headed home by Dale Sears with 37 seconds on the clock. Leverstock completed the comfortable win in the second half with two goals in two minutes –Anthony Paige put them two up on 59 minutes and two minutes later Steve Hawes produced a tremendous free kick to seal the points. There was still time for leading scorer James Armstrong to be sent off for 2 bookings, but the 10 men safely saw out the last twenty minutes. **Hertford Town** looked to be out of contention a few weeks ago, but their 2-0 win at home to **Cockfosters** followed their 6-0 thrashing of Aylesbury Vale, and keeps them just about in touch in 5th place. The day's biggest crowd of 135, basking in the sunshine, however had to wait until the last 10 minutes for the two goals. Both came from Kevin Cooper (who else?) – the first from a penalty for which Ben Andreas was sent off, and the second coming in added on time. Another of the early front runners, **Hanwell Town**, have also struggled recently, and have slipped back to 10th spot following their 5-1 defeat away at **Langford**. The home side quickly went into a two goal lead, through Wes Byrne and Joe Delaselle, and the latter added his second just before half time. He completed his hat trick just after the break, and although Dean Scarlett pulled one back for Hanwell, Marc Barnes added the fifth with a 35 yard lob just before the final whistle. **Tring Athletic** completed the double over **Biggleswade United**, but were made to wait until the 85th minute before Mark Burfoot scored the all important goal with a looping header. **Colney Heath** lifted themselves out of the bottom four with an important 2-0 home win over **St. Margaretsbury** – both goals coming in the first half from Greg Deacon and Jamie Hazell. Despite a very early goal from Renars Zarchenko, **Kingsbury London Tigers** went down 2-1 at home to **Broxbourne Boro**, who equalised with an OG after 11 minutes but had to wait until 13 minutes from the end before Danny Ward scored the winner. An enthusiastic band of loyal supporters (new and old) greeted **Ruislip Manor** as they ran out for their away game at **Welwyn Garden City** – they were glad to still be playing football and the supporters were glad to still have a team to watch. The will they, won't they, yes they will scenario over Ruislip Manor's presence at the game had led the League Referees Secretary, always quick off the mark, to reallocate the match officials – a situation which came back to bite him on the bottom, and led to said League Referees Secretary having to make his seasonal full debut on the line! This time he had brought his own kit, which fitted – almost. The years rolled back as he sprightly zoomed up and down the line –just the

one howling clanger to report when, again too quickly off the mark, he flagged some poor soul offside who was out walking his dog! The better chances in the first half fell to Welwyn, but they somehow managed not to take them, although the young Manor keeper James Christian, in spite of performing on a bed of porridge, was on top form, whilst the huge centre back won everything in the air. The game came to life on the hour when Manor were awarded a penalty after Lee Gardner was dismissed for violent conduct. Neil Fyfield's spot kick gave Darren Bonfield, on loan from Edgware Town, no chance. Welwyn lost their shape and discipline as they pushed for an equaliser, and the Manor forwards were able to break at will. Two such opportunities were taken, by Justin Bailey in the 68th minute and Michael Walker in the 78th minute, and the Manor supporters, after a really dramatic week, finally had a 3-0 victory to celebrate. Manor still had to thank their young keeper for some outstanding reflex saves in the second half, which enabled them to enjoy their afternoon of triumph.

DIVISION ONE ROUND UP

Just four points separate the top six clubs. Four of the clubs won on Saturday, whilst the other two, **Stony Stratford Town** and **Kentish Town**, battled out a 1-1 draw. Gary Flinn gave Stony the lead after 26 minutes, but Town drew level right on the stroke of half time through Lee Scott. This point gained for Town keeps them top of the table, a point clear of **Hoddesdon Town** who beat **Cranfield United** 3-2. Peter Ulatowski gave the Lilywhites the lead, only to see Barry Bellhouse bring Cranfield back on terms within minutes, but Andy Martin restored the lead just before half time. Matt Spiers further increased the lead just after the break, although Cranfield bounced back almost immediately with a Tom Barrett penalty, they couldn't find the equalizer. Craig Hammond scored his fifth hat-trick in nine games as **Royston Town** comprehensively beat basement side **Winslow United** 5-1. The Crows have now gone 13 games unbeaten, and Hammond set them on the road after just seven minutes with a clever lofted finish. Just 20 seconds after the restart, Winslow drew level, but, the Crows soon hit the hosts with a double blow in the 52nd and 53rd minutes, through Ashley Townsend and Tom Malins. Two further goals from Hammond completed his hat trick, and keeps Royston's bid for promotion firmly on track. **New Bradwell St. Peter** battled to overcome strugglers **Harpenden Town** and the first half was fairly even with the only chances falling to the home team as Greg Tite saw his shot well saved and then Bradwell wasted a free kick from a good position. Tom Kennard, back from injury, in the Bradwell goal did not have a save to make throughout the half. The second half was a livelier affair and Bradwell scored on 49 minutes when Brendan Quill, up for a free kick, turned and shot the ball high into the net from 20 yards. Almost immediately, Harpenden should have equalised from the penalty spot, but the kick hit the Bradwell crossbar and bounced to safety. After a period of Bradwell pressure, Harpenden began to dominate the match and were twice through one on one with the keeper. However, both these excellent chances were missed and sub Kevin Hyde made it 2-0 just before the end. **Haringey Borough** kept in touch with the leaders with a comprehensive 6-1 victory away at **Bedford** – they did score all 7 goals but one was in their own net! Ry Hardy was Haringey's hero with a second half hat trick, and there were singles from Karl Lewis, Jamaal Duncan, and Melvin Thompson. Bedford were not the only wounded party, as Referees Assistant Tanya Bradley was taken out by a tackle and had to leave the field injured! **Sport London e Benfica** kept themselves on the fringe of the promotion race with a 5-0 home win over **Arlesey Athletic**. The home side were only one goal to the good at half time, courtesy of Yahya Younes, but second half doubles from Dani Conceicao and Abdi Kharim Muse completed the comprehensive victory. The highest scoring game of the division took place at Ampthill Town where visitors Cheshunt Reserves emerged as 5-3 victors. Cheshunt were three goals up inside 25 minutes thanks to Richard Smith and a brace from Tom Hart, and although Michael Munday pulled one back a minute before the break, Liam Farrell added a fourth for Cheshunt just before the whistle blew. On the hour, both sides scored one apiece, Munday getting his second for Ampthill and Matt Cook scoring for Cheshunt, and in the final minute Martin Wells added the home side's third. **Brache Sparta's** usual crowd of 6 were reduced to 4 this week, presumably two were on holiday, or possibly playing, and the stay a ways missed the 2-0 win over **Amersham Town** –

both goals coming in the first 15 minutes from James Ingram and Michael Otukoya. **Sun Postal Sports** 2-1 win away to **Bedford Town Reserves** was their third on the trot, and has quickly moved them off the bottom and up to 15th place. Postal went into a two goal lead through Andrew Mills, from the penalty spot, and Darren Lancaster, before Daniel Wems replied for Bedford.

DIVISION TWO ROUND UP

Leaders **Kings Langley** only managed a 0-0 draw at home to lowly **Padbury United**, but still remain three points clear at the top, and with two games in hand. Their two nearest rivals could only manage one point apiece, and **The 61 FC** took the opportunity to move even closer following their 3-1 away win at **Markyate**. A brace from Ricky Clark and one from James Dunnington saw 61 FC safely home – Markyate's reply coming from Dale McDermott. **AFC Dunstable** drew 0-0 at home to **Old Bradwell United** whilst a Robbie Morgan goal in the 83rd minute salvaged a point for **Risborough Rangers** against **Crawley Green**, for whom Danny Watson had given a first half lead. Not many goals in the Division this week, but there were 5 at **Totternhoe** where the home side had Gary Simpson to thank for their last gasp winner against **Tring Corinthians**. Totternhoe went into an early two goal lead through Sean Bishop and Simpson's first, Phil Hawkins and Joynul Hoque brought Corrie level at 2-2 before Simpson's vital winner. **Aston Clinton** defeated **Kent Athletic** 1-0 with a Shaun Walker goal in the 59th minute, and **Caddington** came back from **Mursley United** with a 2-0 win, thanks to Tony Scurry and Paul Gregory.

BEDS INTERMEDIATE CUP – QUARTER FINALS

Crawley Green Reserves moved into the Semi Finals, where they will be away to Stotfold Reserves, after a 3-2 defeat of **AFC Dunstable Reserves** in extra time. **Biggleswade United Reserves** lost 4-1 to **Dunstable United**, who will now meet Ampthill Town Reserves.

A TIMELY MESSAGE..... TO ALL REFEREES IN THE SSMFL

From Mike Taylor – Chairman of the Association of SSMFL Referees

A happy and successful 2008 to you all and as we say in the trade “**May your balls run kindly.**”

The second half of the season looks like proving to be a tight race for the Premier Division Title, so no doubt many testing games for us all, with similar challenges certainly happening in the other Divisions (dare not mention relegation). Unfortunately the desire for success means that some Clubs and Players will go beyond legitimate means to reach their goals and your tolerances will be pushed to the limits (and beyond). It is imperative therefore that ALL Match Officials deal accurately and positively with any misconduct they witness and report it to the appropriate Authorities. For this reason you have all been reminded of what is permissible within the technical areas and in case you have not noticed, a large proportion of `Trouble` seems to occur within these confines. And whilst being seated will not completely eradicate the problem, there is no doubt that it becomes easier to control. This instruction is applicable to EVERY division in our League, so let us display some consistency for the remainder of the season. The clubs` have all been told in no uncertain terms what is expected of them, so if you have to `report benches`, then so be it.

Membership continues to grow thanks in no small part the undiluted efforts of Messrs Hamilton and Ewen. However equally important is your participation in our activities, whether it be attendance at meetings, items for the web-site or just conversations with your committee, either way it's great to have you all on board.

Many thanks to our contributors - please keep all news /views / items of interest coming to billscholes@hotmail.co.uk

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