

MOLTEN SPARTAN SOUTH MIDLANDS LEAGUE

NEWSLETTER No.32

By Bill Scholes

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There were 4 hat trick heroes on Saturday. Matt Wardle scored all 3 for Leverstock Green, Darren Dykes notched 4 out of Stony Stratford's 7, Richard Harker scored 3 for AFC Dunstable and Jonnie Eteson's 3 were his first league goals for Tring Corinthians.

PREMIER DIVISION ROUND UP

With both of the main contenders winning, the only change in the top 3 placings this week has been Chalfont moving up to second as Biggleswade Town drop down to third. Both Beaconsfield SYCOB and Chalfont St. Peter warmed up for their important clash this Tuesday with good home wins. **Beaconsfield** got off to a good start in their game with **Aylesbury Vale** with a Mickey Swaysland goal after 15 minutes, and Oliver Godwin added to the lead some 20 minutes later. Craig O'Connor wrapped up the proceedings with the third goal 5 minutes from time. **Chalfont St. Peter** had possibly the harder task, but went one better winning 4-0 against **Langford**. Bradley Bubb and Terrell Lewis re-found their shooting boots as they put the Saints two up just after the break, but they had to wait until the last ten minutes before Alan Hedley and Toby Francis completed the scoring. The second largest crowd of the day were in **Biggleswade** to see the local derby between **United** and **Town**, which finished with honours even at 2-2. Town will probably see this as two points dropped as they slipped back to third place, but they were always playing catch-up as they twice went behind to their hosts. Robbie O'Dell opened the scoring for Utd after 14 minutes following a corner, only for the Waders to equalise just before the break with a well struck half-volley from Keith Thomas. Five minutes after the Jaffas, Luke Lincoln calmly put Utd back in front and it was left to Graham Buchanan to save the Waders bacon with just over 20 minutes left.

Hanwell Town, who have dropped down the table of late, bounced back to form with a 4-2 home win over in form **Tring Athletic**. This game kicked off nearly 45 minutes late, due to the horrendous traffic problems on the A40 – a fact to which the League Chairman can testify, as he also fell foul of this problem on his way to Ruislip Manor! Charley Baverstock and Danny Edwards gave Hanwell an early two-goal lead which they held until a minute after half time, when Mark Burfoot reduced the deficit for Tring. However the two goal cushion was restored a couple of minutes later when Ryan McIntosh added Hanwell's third. Another burst of activity with just under 15 minutes left saw Burfoot get his second to bring it back to 3-2 but Michael Chukuroah then completed the scoring for the hosts shortly after. **Hertford Town** lost their second forward in as many weeks when Ryan Redford moved to near-neighbours Ware during the week, but still had enough fire power to see off **Colney Heath** 3-0. Kevin Cooper gave the Blues an early lead, which Lee Roberts doubled after 28 minutes. Neil Jordan missed a penalty for Colney just after the break, and new signing Attila Korsoveczki completed a very satisfactory debut by scoring the third goal with a couple of minutes left. **Welwyn Garden City**, with a brace from Jake Parratt, looked to be heading for a comfortable 2-0 win over visitors **Kingsbury London Tigers**, but with just over 10 minutes left, two goals in two minutes from Tarik Ellekhlisi and Hardy Moreiro brought the scores level and it was left to Craig Tomkins to notch the Citizens winner with just three minutes left. A brace from Ricky Light helped **St. Margaretsbury** to a 4-2 win over bottom club **London Colney**, who sadly in their centenary year are beginning to look almost certain relegation candidates. Another centenary celebrating side, **Holmer Green**, had been keeping Colney company at the foot of the table, but gave themselves a lifeline when they beat **Ruislip Manor** 2-0 to open up a three point gap between themselves and their hosts. Surprisingly for a vital "six pointer", the game generally lacked any real passion, apart from that shown by the Manor manager who was dismissed from the dugout mid way through the first half – not the ideal scenario for a team desperately requiring the three points. A long

ball over the top dissected the Manor centre back and the keeper in the 25th minute, allowing Luke Byrne to round the keeper and slot calmly home for Holmer's first goal, but in spite of Manor's territorial advantage in the second half, they lacked that final cutting edge, and it was no surprise when Holmer wrapped up the game when Jay Gould, just, knocked the ball in at the far post following good work from Alex MacDonald in the 84th minute. For the second game running, Holmer lost a defender to concussion – must be the lack of school milk – but reorganised well, with James Williams giving an exemplary display at the back. **Cockfosters** went down 1-0 at home to fourth-placed **Brimsdown Rovers** in a game that lacked goalmouth action – Rovers winner coming in the 75th minute when James Martin headed home. **Harefield United** had to rely on a goal from Alex Brown deep into added on time to garner all three points in their 2-1 win at home to **Oxhey Jets**. Ben Buckle gave the Hares the lead in the 10th minute, but Tim O'Mara equalised for the Jets two minutes later and a draw looked on the cards until Brown's late intervention. The mid table clash between **Leverstock Green** and **Broxbourne Borough** resulted in a 3-0 win for the Green which enabled them to leapfrog over their visitors into 9th place. Matt Wardle scored twice in the first 17 minutes, but had to wait until a minute into added on time before completing his hat trick from the penalty spot.

DIVISION ONE ROUND UP

Still only 5 points separate the top 6 clubs, and with 5 out of those 6 winning, and one drawing, on Saturday there was little change at the top. **Royston Town's** 17-match unbeaten run ended last Wednesday night when they lost 1-0 to Kentish Town, but they bounced back with a 4-0 win at home to **Brache Sparta**, which took them back up to second spot. Another big crowd of 125 saw Brache defend stoutly in the first half, but once leading scorer Craig Hammond, back from injury, opened the scoring immediately after the break, there was no way back for the visitors. Hammond added his second on 75 minutes, and late singles from Greg Jackson and Tom Galvin completed the scoring. **Kentish Town**, who regained top spot from Haringey Boro in the week, consolidated their position with a 2-1 win at home to **Amersham Town**, but as league leaders, they must be disappointed with a crowd of only 18. Jonathan Donoghue gave Kentish a very early lead and, although Jude Eboji brought the scores level right on half time, Lee Scott came up with the winner after 54 minutes. **Haringey Borough**, leaders last Saturday, slipped back to fourth as they could only manage a 3-3 draw away to second from bottom **Harpندن Town**. It could have been worse, however, as the home side raced into a three goal lead after just 15 minutes, thanks to Ben Ralphs, Adam Smith and Richard Taasse, but Karl Lewis pulled one back just before half time, and Patrick Billong and Joel Phillips completed the recovery late in the second half. Another side to benefit from Haringey's dropped points were **Hoddesdon Town**, who moved up a place to 3rd with a remarkable 6-3 win away at lowly **Cranfield United**. A disastrous first half saw United go in at the break 6-0 down and staring a large defeat in the face. All six of Hoddesdon's goals came in the first 32 minutes, through a brace from Andy Martin, and singles from Matt Spiers, Ritchie Howard, Jason Soriel and Craig Hinton. However, Utd rallied strongly in the second period and clawed three goals back in 15 minutes from Barry Bellhouse, Alistair Shearer and Tom McFarlane. The nine goals scored in this game however paled into insignificance with the twelve goals that rattled in at Ostlers Lane, where **Stony Stratford** eventually ran out 7-5 winners over visiting **Winslow United**. Going into the last 10 minutes the score was 5-5, but two late goals gave Stony the win. Darren Dykes was the hero for Stony with 4 goals, but there were also contributions from Shaun Carr and Dave Holloway, as well as a Michael Harris own goal. Joey Acheampong and Ryan Wiffin both scored a brace for Winslow, and along with the other scorer Andrew Wright, must consider themselves very unlucky to be on the losing side. There was a second half brace for Lee Coulter for **New Bradwell St. Peter** as they kept in touch at the top with a 2-0 win away at **Bedford FC**, whilst **Cheshunt Reserves** returned from a rain-swept afternoon at **Buckingham Athletic** with a 1-0 win. In a fast and furious first half both defences were on top and neither keeper had to make a save throughout the half. The only thing of note was the unfortunate injury to Graham Deary of Cheshunt who was stretchered off with a twisted knee on 18 minutes. The second half saw more of the same although

the Buckingham keeper was the busier as he saved well twice to keep Cheshunt out. The only threat on the visitors' goal was from a free kick which went straight at the keeper. As the game went on the surface became more greasy and this led to the only goal of the game. A seemingly harmless shot from substitute Danny Nicholls somehow squirmed under the body of the home keeper and rolled slowly over the line and into the net on 85 minutes. An unfortunate end to a good game A 3rd minute goal from Kevin Bruce gave **Sport London e Benfica** the lead for most of their game against **Sun Postal Sports**, but Matt Neal's 79th minute equaliser spoilt the party, and in the days other game, a Martin Wells header was enough to secure all three points as **Amptill Town** beat **Arlesey Athletic** 1-0.

DIVISION TWO ROUND UP

It's as you were at the top as all three contenders won their games. AFC Dunstable remain in pole position, by dint of their superior goal difference, but have played four more games than Kings Langley. **Dunstable** ran out 4-1 winners over visitors **Risborough Rangers**, helped by a hat trick from Richard Harker, whilst **Kings Langley** had to overcome the shock of going behind to an early Ricky Clark goal for **The 61 FC**, before fighting back with two goals from Lee Burchill and Lee Johnson. Third placed **Crawley Green** came away from **Mursley United** with a 4-1 victory, helped by a brace from Tom Freeman, a singleton from Luke Singleton and a Steve Mooney own goal – Will Smith, taking a break from saving the world, scoring for Mursley. **Aston Clinton** moved up into 4th place with their 4-1 win away at **Totternhoe**. On the mark for the visitors were Stefan Wilson with a pair, Aaron Usmani and Michael Stockton whilst Michael Solomon replied for Totternhoe. **Tring Corinthians** moved up two places to 8th following their 6-0 home win against **Old Bradwell United**. Jonnie Eteson scored his first league goal for the club, and then added two more for a memorable hat trick (I'm sure it would have pleased his dad !), whilst the other scorers were Philip Hawkins, Charles Snoxell and Chris West. Tyrone Bere scored two for **Padbury United** as they put a bit more daylight between themselves and the bottom two with a 3-1 win at home to **Markyate**, and **Pitstone & Ivinghoe** had a 2-1 home win against **Kent Athletic**. Mishak Cole gave the visitors the lead in the 41st minute, but James Mountfort equalised with 7 minutes left, and Lawrence Bunker produced the coup de grace with a penalty in the last minute – he has now found the net in 9 out of the last 10 games.

MORE CONGRATULATIONS TO..... MORE REFEREES

Pat Miller, a Level One with this league, has been appointed as referee to the FA Carlsberg Vase semi - final 2nd leg between Needham Market and Kirkham & Wesham on Sat 29th March. Pat, who has been a Football League referee for a few seasons now, still referees on the Spartan South Midlands and in fact refereed a recent Premier game at Oxhey Jets. Before he took up refereeing, Pat played in the South Midlands Football League with The 61FC and Harpenden Town. Rob Mackay, who refereed our Premier Division Cup Final last year and is now a level 3, has been appointed as an assistant referee in the same game. Two excellent appointments and another feather in the SSMFL cap.

REASONS FOR POSTPONING A GAME –PART 1

The very strong winds that buffeted the country last week blew down one of the floodlight pylons at Tring Athletic, causing the postponement of their game on Tuesday night against Oxhey Jets.

REASONS FOR POSTPONING A GAME – PART 2

Following the resignation of their Chairman during the week, Amersham Town were surprised to find that one set of goalposts had disappeared on Friday. A suggestion from The Editor that either

both teams kicked into the same goal, or jumpers were used for goalposts was dismissed as frivolous (quite right) and Town's reserve fixture against Cranfield was postponed.

OFF TO SUNNIER CLIMES

Congratulations to Rowan Taylor, a playing member of Cockfosters FC ,who has been selected by The Montserrat Football Association to represent his country in their forthcoming World Cup Qualifiers. Rowan is in the squad for Montserrat's qualifying match against Surinam, to be played on Wednesday 26th March 2008 in Port of Spain (Trinidad).

Kentish Town, bidding for promotion to the Premier Division, are bracing themselves for the loss of highly rated head coach Clement Tenile. The former Nigerian international was in Lagos last week being interviewed for the job of Manger to the Nigerian national team. Even if he fails, he could still end up as Assistant to the current caretaker coach, James Peters.

NEW MANAGERAT HARPENDEN TOWN

Harpenden Town have appointed current reserve team manager Paul Tomkins into the first-team hot-seat after Steve Cornwell left by mutual consent. The club had no hesitation in offering the job to Tomkins, who managed their successful under-18 floodlit side three seasons ago, before moving to Spartan Premier outfit Welwyn Garden City, where he guided their reserves to runners-up spot as well as winning the Reserve Challenge Cup. Last season, with co-manager Rob Butler, he resurrected the Saturday reserve team set up at Southern League outfit Berkhamsted Town and left them at the end of last season having brought them to a level where they could move into the Suburban League this season. Tomkins has appointed Gavin Kelsey as his assistant and Tony Kavanagh will continue as 1st Team coach.

NEW MANAGER..... AT RUISLIP MANOR

Following the resignation of Mickey Johnson on Monday evening, Ruislip Manor moved swiftly to appoint Paul Pitfield as their new Manager. Paul will be assisted in his bid to keep Manor in the Premier Division by trusty lieutenants Richard Mount and Fergal O'Hagan. The club Manor for five years, achieving a best league position of seventh in season 2002/03 and leading the Club to its first piece of silverware in fifteen years - the Spartan South Midlands League Challenge Trophy in season 2005/06. He also represented Ruislip Manor during his playing career. Ruislip Manor FC would also like to express its sincerest gratitude to outgoing manager Mickey Johnson and his staff for their tremendous hard work and endeavour in what has been a particularly difficult season. Mickey deserves a great deal of respect for his commitment to Ruislip Manor during some of its darkest days of recent times earlier in the campaign, and he will always be welcome at Grosvenor Vale.

MYSTIC MICK – THE VOICE OF THE BALLS (Or is that just what he talks)

Any Dream Will Do As Mystic Mick's (alleged) illegal betting syndicate strikes again. The Editor received the following email on Sunday morning.

On Saturday, I went to Biggleswade for the derby game. Whilst travelling to pick up John Rowe, I realised I hadn't done my lottery, so I stopped just around the corner from John's humble abode and bought my lucky dips in a petrol station. You see I always get them at my local Tesco's either on a Friday or a Saturday morning. Being the busy bee that I am, I had forgotten. Anyway, to continue, I Picked up Rowey and travelled to Biggleswade in very good time and thoroughly enjoyed an entertaining local derby. Afterwards, I had a couple of pints and made my way home, via Rowey's. I intended to stop of at my local Chinese takeaway to get some sustenance, but to my horror they were shut. Why I don't know, bearing in mind it was about 8.30pm. On arrival at home, I explained to the

War Department that the Chinese was shut and caught the lottery being drawn on the telly. I quickly made a note in the book that I'd used to assess the referee that afternoon, commenting to 'er indoors that no one would win this week. However, I decided to check my tickets and lo and behold I found I had three in the same line, but then it became four and then it was five. I calmly told 'er indoors that I'd got five numbers, and she never believed me, so I sat alongside her on the settee whilst we checked them. She then pointed out that I'd not only got five in a row, but also the bonus ball. "How much is that then?" I asked. "How do I know" came the curt reply. Ingenuity then set in, so I logged onto the lottery website and, because I was too eager, the prize figures wouldn't show, I had to wait. Not to be outdone, I checked back all the Saturdays this year and found the lowest prize awarded was £39,000 and the highest was £169,000. Oooh, not bad I thought, perhaps I'll get 50 grand here. At 9.45pm I checked the website again, and lo and behold the magic figure was flashing brightly before my eyes. £.....! Mine all mine and I couldn't believe it. A phone call to lottery HQ confirmed what I'd already thought and that was I'd won.

Oh, he also put something else in about Pompey beating Utd in the FA Cup, but I thought I'd leave that bit out! Mick picked up his winnings from Lottery HQ on Monday, accompanied by a phalanx of bodyguards comprised of SSMFL Referees, all looking very expectant.

Incidentally, Mick was also in the news on Sunday, being quoted in The Non league Paper on how the FA should spend their multi million handout to Grass roots football. A copy of his thoughts will appear in next weeks Newsletter.

MIDWEEK (17/18 MARCH) RACE FOR THE TOP As Sir Alex said a few years ago "It's squeaky bum time"

In the Premier Division on Monday night, **Biggleswade Town** climbed back to second spot following their 2-1 away win at **Ruislip Manor**, but 24 hours later, **Chalfont St. Peter** were back in second place as they cut **Beaconsfield SYCOB's** lead at the top to just one point after producing an excellent all-round performance to defeat their nearest rivals by 2-0. In a game that was played at a harum-scarum pace, and that occasionally threatened to boil over, time on the ball was at a premium, but it was the skill and pace of the Saints forwards that played a vital role in the eventual outcome. Chalfont took the lead right on the stroke of half time when the Rams defence was exposed down the left and David Hughes gleefully converted the cross. The home side dominated the second half, and the large crowd of 188 were rewarded with one of the best goals seen for many a long time when Bradley Bubb left several Rams defenders trailing in his wake in a mesmerising run that culminated in him rounding keeper Nick Hart to slot the ball into an open net.

In Division One, **Hoddesdon Town** became the new leaders as they beat **Harpenden Town** 3-0 with goals from Andy Martin, Kevin Metevier and Ritchie Howard. They now have the same number of points as Kentish Town, but a superior goal difference of two.

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

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