

## MOLTEN SPARTAN SOUTH MIDLANDS LEAGUE

### NEWSLETTER No.34

*By Bill Scholes*

**SATURDAY 29<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2008**

With the frightful weather on Friday, it was a surprise that as many games survived the downpours as did – obviously a compliment to the unstinting efforts of the overworked and underpaid groundsmen. However the driving wind and rain still had a large part to play on the Saturday, as numerous games really did become games of two halves – a look at the times of goals scored only serves to prove the point.

*There were 5 hat tricks this week, three in the Premier Division and two in Division Two. Danny Ward for Broxbourne, Mark Gallagher for Hanwell Town and Simon Williams for Holmer Green were the Premier hot shots, whilst Luke Byrne of Tring Corinthians, who went the extra mile with four goals, and Paul Gash of Kings Langley set Division Two alight.*

#### PREMIER DIVISION ROUND UP

**It's still all up for grabs at the top of the table, although Beaconsfield SYCOB are re-emerging as slight favourites following Saturdays results. They now have a two point lead over Biggleswade Town who moved back into second place following their 1-0 win over Brimsdown Rovers, but crucially have two games in hand, whilst their lead over Chalfont St. Peter is now back to four points following the latter's loss at St. Margaretsbury.**

**Beaconsfield** had a comfortable 5-0 home win over **Biggleswade United**, with Adrian Sear, Craig O'Connor and Oliver Godwin putting them three up by half time. O'Connor's second and a late strike from Anthony Wright completed the scoring. **Biggleswade Town** came back from **Brimsdwn Rovers** with a 1-0 win – the goal coming in the first half from Keith Thomas who finished off a Dan Heron cross. Both sides hit the bar in the second half, but there was no further scoring. Although **St. Margaretsbury** surprisingly just lost to Holmer Green in midweek, they are one of the in-form teams and possibly therefore it was no real surprise when they defeated **Chalfont St. Peter** 2-1 at home. On a heavy pitch only passed fit in the morning, the Bury took an early lead after 5 minutes through Andy Birnie, but Andy Hedley brought the Saints back onto level terms on the 20 minute mark. With 5 minutes remaining before the Jaffa break, Ricky Light scored Bury's all-important winner. The cloud hanging over **Holmer Green's** future as a SSMFL club has not dampened the player's enthusiasm in any way and 4 wins from their last 6 games has opened up an eight point gap between themselves and Ruislip Manor. The Green's visited **Oxhey Jets** and the match produced a seven goal thriller, with Holmer just edging the game with the help of a hat trick from Simon Williams. In almost constant rain, the excellent Oxhey pitch held up very well and the first half was end to end stuff. Whilst Oxhey played all the football, it was Holmer that scored all the goals. From Holmer's first serious attack Williams scored his first goal as he headed in a corner kick at the far post on 15 minutes. Only three minutes later the home side found themselves two down when their keeper could only push out a cross which went straight to Alex MacDonald who headed into an empty net on 18 minutes. Worse was to follow for Oxhey when Williams swept the ball home from the edge of the box on 38 minutes. Oxhey had their chances but poor finishing saw them goalless at half time. The expected Oxhey onslaught began at the start of the second half and they scored on 53 minutes when Luke Lloyd struck a superb shot into the top corner of the Holmer net. For the next few minutes, Holmer survived with a mixture of good defending and good luck. But they could not prevent Oxhey from scoring on 74 minutes when substitute Ben Alexander volleyed the ball home. It looked all over for Holmer as the home team were camped in their half and seeking the equaliser. However, on a rare second half raid, Oxhey allowed Williams the time and space to

score his third goal on 78 minutes. Oxhey did score again when Tim O'Mara shot in from close range on 84 minutes, but Holmer just held on for a valuable win to ease their relegation worries. Two other games produced comprehensive victories for the home sides – **Hanwell Town** ran out 7-1 winners over **Colney Heath** helped by a hat trick from Mark Gallagher. At two nil down after 12 minutes, Colney briefly rallied when they pulled one back 4 minutes later, but three more goals in the first half, and two more in the second completed the rout. Danny Ward's hat trick for **Broxbourne Borough** put them well on their way to a 5-0 win over **Welwyn Garden City**, four of the goals coming in the first half. In the only other game played on a day when there were 4 postponements due to waterlogged pitches, **Ruislip Manor** played their second game under new manager Paul Pitfield and were rewarded with a valuable point in a 0-0 draw at home to **Tring Athletic**.

#### MONDAY 31<sup>st</sup> MARCH

**Ruislip Manor** gained another point on Monday evening in a thrilling 3-3 draw at home against title chasing **Chalfont St. Peter**. Whilst Manor will see this as a point gained, Chalfont will view it as two points dropped – they are now three points behind Beaconsfield, but have now played one game more.

#### DIVISION ONE ROUND UP

Just two games, Buckingham Athletic and Kentish Town, fell foul of the weather in this division. **Hoddesdon Town** remain at the top, with a four point lead over nearest rivals Haringey Borough and Kentish Town, after a hard fought 1-1 draw at home to **Arlesey Athletic**. The driving wind and rain played a large part in the game, with Hoddesdon going into half time with a single goal lead from Peter Ulatowski, but the visitor's pressure in the second half gained them a deserved equaliser from Terry Locke. **Haringey Borough** kept up the pressure as they won 3-1 away at **Cheshunt Reserves** with two goals from Halls, and one from Hardy – Geddes replying for the home side, but **Royston Town's** promotion hopes suffered another blow following a 1-0 defeat at **New Bradwell St Peter**. The Crows have now picked up just six points from their last six games, with Saturday's loss only their second league defeat since the beginning of November. In an entertaining game, Mark Kalek's confident strike in the 83<sup>rd</sup> minute was enough to see New Bradwell St Peter home and although in 5th place, they are only six points behind the leaders. **Stony Stratford Town's** faint hopes also suffered a setback as they could only draw 1-1 away at **Bedford FC**, and even then they had to rely on a Matt Clinch goal in the very last minute to secure the solitary point. No surprise that the man who put Bedford in front just before half time was Darek Jozwiak. With just 15 minutes left on the clock, and leading 4-0, **Bedford Town Reserves** must have thought that they were home and hosed, but **Harpenden Town** had other ideas and amazingly scored four times in the last 15 minutes to gain a vital point in their battle to escape from the foot of the table. Scorers for Town Reserves were Alan Belton, Chris Winton, Paul Draycott, and Anish Kinder, whilst the Harpenden saviours were Chris Gregory with two and Ali Collins and Iain Turkentine. The point gained moves Harpenden out of the bottom two, as both Cranfield United and Winslow United lost. **Cranfield** remain rooted at the bottom, losing 2-1 at home to **Sun Postal Sports**, and whilst **Winslow** lost by the same margin to **Sport London e Benfica**, it took two goals in the last two minutes, from Alfonso Ferreira and Yahya Younes, to snatch the victory.

#### DIVISION TWO ROUND UP

A hat trick from Paul Gash, and a brace from Wayne Drysdale, helped **Kings Langley** to a 6-1 win away at **Old Bradwell United**, and they now need just 5 points from their remaining 4 games to clinch the title. **AFC Dunstable** and **Crawley Green**, second and third respectively, battled out a 2-2 draw, a result which was of no great help to either side, as they both looked to secure the runners up spot. Crawley opened the scoring through Craig Meyrick in the 27<sup>th</sup> minute, but a penalty from

Felix Kyeremeh and one from Richard Harker turned the game in Dunstable's favour, only for Luke Singleton to pop up with the equaliser with just 6 minutes left. Green are now looking favourites, but they could still just be pipped by **The 61FC**, who did not enhance their prospects by losing 2-0 away to **Caddington**. The home side relied on an OG and a Danny Swann goal for their victory. **Tring Corinthians** rattled in three goals in each half as they overwhelmed Markyate 6-0 – Luke Byrne, after a short spell with Holmer Green, celebrating his return with 4 goals. In a mid table clash, **Aston Clinton** and **Pitstone & Ivinghoe** shared four goals - Aaron Usmani and Tony Mendicino scoring for the home side whilst Pitstone opened the scoring with Lawrence Bunker and completed the scoring with Mitch Hamilton.

### **HERTS SENIOR TROPHY FINAL**

Congratulations to **Hoddesdon Town** who lifted the Herts Senior Centenary Trophy last week with a 3-1 win over **Hertford Heath**. Two late goals, both in the last 10 minutes, from Andy Martin and Ritchie Howard sealed the win over their Herts County League opponents at the County Ground, Letchworth. Peter Ulatowski had given the Lilywhites the lead in the 39<sup>th</sup> minute, but a Damian Thomas OG just before the break put Hertford back in the game.

### **BERKS & BUCKS SENIOR TROPHY FINAL**

The final of the above competition will be played at Haywood Way, home of Aylesbury Vale on Wednesday 23 April with a 7.45 KO. The two finalists are **Beaconsfield SYCOB** and **Newport Pagnell** (United Counties League).

### **HOLMER GREEN FC**

Holmer Green FC are holding an Extraordinary General meeting on Monday 7 April to discuss the future of the Club, and in particular it's continuing membership of the Spartan South Midlands League. The meeting has been publicised on local radio, in the local press, and on Non League Daily website. All interested parties who are in a position to offer urgent financial sponsorship and/or practical support, will be warmly welcomed. However, Chairman John Anderson has stated that if this support is not forthcoming at the meeting, the decision to vacate the Spartan South Midland League will follow as a matter of course. Practical measures in place in the short term have seen Holmer not enter the FA Cup or FA Vase for the season 2008 /09. Chairman Anderson went on to say "Holmer Green would undoubtedly survive as a football club, but at what level would remain to be seen. The bottom line is that it equates to being far too costly and unrealistic for clubs such as our own to play at this level."

### **NEW BRADWELL ST. PETER FC**

Congratulations to New Bradwell St. Peter who have secured a grant of **£87,469** from The Football Stadia Improvement Fund, supporters of the Football Foundation, and the largest funder of non league football in the country. This award will enable the club to build a new changing room pavilion, a new training area and new toilet facilities for spectators. The existing changing areas are in a poor state of repair and they fail to achieve the minimum standards required. The football club therefore is planning to install a new modular changing facility which will provide two dual gender changing rooms, accessible toilet/changing areas, two officials' changing rooms, a treatment room, small kitchen and storage areas. The modular building will comprise of reinforced concrete panel walls and galvanised steel roofing all internally insulated with a powder coated steel finish – a requirement of the planning consent so that it fits in with the existing buildings on the site.

New Bradwell St Peter Football Club is a member's club and forms part of New Bradwell St Peter Sports Association which also encompasses New Bradwell Cricket Club.

Paul Thorogood, Chief Executive of the Football Stadia Improvement Fund and Football Foundation, said: "On behalf of the Football Stadia Improvement Fund I am delighted to be able to award this grant to New Bradwell St Peter Football Club. "A vibrant community team is vital for the future of football. The Football Stadia Improvement Fund's aim is to revolutionise funding for the grass roots in the same way the professional game has been transformed over the last ten years. I pay a particular tribute to the hard work and dedication of all at New Bradwell St Peter FC for making this funding a reality."

### **REFEREES PROMOTIONS AND COUNTY CUP APPOINTMENTS**

Listed below are all those officials who have been promoted and all those who have received County Cup Final appointments. Many congratulations to you all and your appointments only bring credit to this league. If I have missed anyone, my apologies, but don't blame me – blame Mystic Mick !

**Promotion to Level 6:** Martyn Cannon, John Marchant, Ian Corner, Ritchie Bywaters, Lewis Fowler, Kevin Hallett, Sam Lewis.

**Promotion to Level 5:** Laurie Benson, Rob Smith, Paul Anjos, John Feenstra, Matt Burton, Russ Endacott, Steve Reuter.

The following have been awarded County Cup Finals:

**As Referee:** Lee Forrester, Russ Endacott, Charlie Bates, John Feenstra, Chris O'Donnell and Stuart Pater

**As Assistants :** Darren Flanagan, Bob Trinder, Shaun Cavanagh, Colin Miceli, Sam Lewis, Gary Wilson, Matt Burton, Dean Joy, Martyn Cannon, Tanya Bradley, Sean O'Neil, Steve O'Connor, Dave Snaith, Jimmy (Fat boy) Campbell, Lewis Fowler.

**As Fourth Official:** Cliff Campbell, Kevin Hallett, Stewart Beardon.

We are now in the last month of the League season, and so best wishes to all involved in the race for league titles or promotion, or for those battling against relegation. Also the very best of luck to those involved in all the various Cup finals coming up.

April is upon us and with it the sound of ball upon willow – bit cold down at Hove yesterday as Sussex eased past Glamorgan in the first of their friendlies before they bid for a hat trick of Championship titles. I am eagerly awaiting next week when the 2008 edition of Wisden will thud through my mailbox – that's when you know summer has arrived!

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

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