

## MOLTEN SPARTAN SOUTH MIDLANDS FOOTBALL LEAGUE NEWSLETTER No. 7

*By Bill Scholes*

What a great week it has been for a young (*sic*) lad born in Manchester and bred in Brighton. A nail-biting 4 days in my deckchair down at Hove saw Sussex retain the County Championship - they even had the decency to wrap it up by lunchtime on Saturday and even allowing for a few genuflections at the feet of my heroes, I was back home in time to get to an FA Vase game. Man Utd stuffing Chelski on Sunday was of course the icing on the cake, and what with the odd birthday to celebrate, a few bottles of red have been opened over the last few days! To be a supporter of both the Premiership Champions and the County Champions in the same year is a great feeling, although it did also happen in 2003, and sadly one that I feel Mick Ewen – a supporter of Pompey and Hampshire – will never feel! However, back to business.....

*There were 2 hat tricks scored by Spartan South Midlands players in the FA Vase – Graham Tibbals scoring all three of Royston Town's goals, and Christian Lester going one better with four for Amptill Town. There were also two four-goal heroes in Division Two – James Potter and Danny Watson, both for Crawley Green.*

### FA Carlsberg VASE – SECOND ROUND QUALIFYING

There were a total of 20 games taking place last Saturday involving SSMFL clubs, and we have ended up with 13 definitely through to the First Round Proper, with one facing a Tuesday night replay. League leaders **Brimsdown Rovers** faced a tough trip into Northants to face **Stewart & Loyds** and were watched by SSMFL Committee member Bob Flight. After a long trip up to Corby, Brimsdown had a torrid opening 15 minutes and only survived on a mixture of good fortune and poor finishing by S&L. However, as the half progressed things became even with Brimsdown being very effective on the break. Both sides missed good chances with only the goalkeeper to beat as the half ended goalless. The second half started well for Brimsdown and a great move ended with Michael Pelley hitting a firm shot past the home keeper on 48 minutes. This rattled S&L and Brimsdown dominated the match. The second goal came on 58 minutes as Scott Atkinson burst through a ragged defence to beat the keeper with a low shot into the corner of the net. The game drifted into a midfield scrap as S&L tried to push forward but time and again they left themselves short at the back and really Brimsdown should have scored more in the end. It was a good performance by Rovers who now meet Barkingside in the next round. **Royston Town**, sitting second from bottom of Division One, had a great 3-2 win over **Bedfont** from the Combined Counties Premier Division. Pacey striker Graham Tibbals was Royston's match-winner with all three goals, but he left it very late before volleying home in the 89<sup>th</sup> minute to send the Crows into the next round. Their opponents in that round will be **Harpenden Town**, who sit just one place below them in Division One i.e. bottom! And they had a great 3-1 win over **Thrapston Town**. Just like the Crows, they also left it late, with two goals in the last 5 minutes sealing the win. The third club from Division One to progress was **Amptill Town**, who also had the biggest win of the day, beating **Beaumont Athletic** from the Essex League by 6-1, including a hat trick from Christian Lester. After an hour **Chalfont St. Peter** were coasting 4-1 in their away tie at **Westbury** in Wiltshire, but two quick goals from the home side caused some nervous moments for the Saints before the end. **Holmer Green** recorded their 4<sup>th</sup> win on the trot with a comfortable 4-1 win at home to Andover New Street in a fairly unmemorable game, whilst **Biggleswade United** (2-1 v Clapton), **Cockfosters** (3-2 v Sporting Bengal United), and **Kingsbury London Tigers** (3-2 v Hatfield Town) all needed extra time to win their games. In the two all Spartan South Midland ties, **Colney Heath** beat **Ruislip Manor** 3-2, and **Tring Athletic** beat **Bedford** 3-0. Down at Pancake Lane, a brace from James Armstrong in the first half saw **Leverstock Green** into a two goal lead at half time against **Halstead Town**, and Alan Arthur's 86<sup>th</sup> minute goal put the icing on a 3-0 win. The one drawn game saw **St. Margaretsbury** go behind to **Harwich & Parkeston** in the first half, but were indebted to Steve

Barker for his 60<sup>th</sup> minute equaliser, giving them a long trip to the coast on Tuesday night, and the opportunity to play in front of one of the biggest stands they are likely to come across. We lost three Premier Division sides at this stage, **Biggleswade Town** went down 4-2 aet to **Bugbrooke St. Michaels** who are riding high in United Counties Division One, **Oxhey Jets** lost 3-0 to Essex Senior side **Concorde Rangers**, and **Broxbourne Boro** lost 2-0 away to **Long Buckby** from the United Counties Premier.

In the First Round Proper, to be played on Sat 6 October, there are three all Spartan South Midland ties, thus ensuring that we will have at least clubs carrying our banner into the Second Round. The most intriguing is the clash between the two bottom clubs in Division One, Royston Town and Harpenden Town – home advantage could swing it for the Crows. Home advantage is in Leverstock Green's favour when they entertain Biggleswade United, whilst Colney Heath travel to Amptill Town. Beaconsfield SYCOB could face a long trip to the Isle of Wight to play Brading Town, should they win their replay, and they could well pass Brockenhurst on the M3 on their journey up from the depths of the New Forest to play Holmer Green.

### PREMIER DIVISION ROUND UP

Only three games in the Premier on Saturday due to all the FA Vase games, and **Harefield United**, by dint of their 1-0 win at home to **Hertford Town**, became the new league leaders. Sean Sonner scored the all-important goal in the 66<sup>th</sup> minute, in front of a crowd of just over 100. **London Colney** continued their sorry start to the season by losing 2-0 at home to **Langford**, whose goals came from Robert Groves and Lee Pateman. The only other game saw **Welwyn Garden City** move out of the bottom three by beating **Beaconsfield SYCOB** 2-1. Alfie McKinley gave the Citizens the lead 15 minutes into the second half, only for Anthony Wright to bring Beaconsfield back level 10 minutes later, but Perry Christian popped up with the winner with just 8 minutes left. On Monday night, Beaconsfield got back to winning ways with a 2-1 home win over Oxhey Jets, thanks to goals by Anthony Wright and a Stuart Swift penalty. Jets sole reply came from Ian Bywater.

### DIVISION ONE ROUND UP

Just the 5 games on Saturday, again due to FA Vase fixtures, and **Brache Sparta** took the opportunity to move to the top, albeit on the fact that they have scored more goals than Bedford. The point that took Brache to the top was garnered from a hard earned 2-2 away draw at **Sport London e Benfica**. Brache took a very early lead through last week's 4 goal hero Lee Hayward, only to see the hosts reach half time with a 2-1 lead, and were indebted to Andre Juraszek for the second half equaliser. There were two other 2-2 draws – **Haringey Borough** being denied the two extra points that would have taken them to the top by being held by visitors, and ex ground sharers **Kentish Town**, whilst very near neighbours **New Bradwell St. Peter** and **Stony Stratford** also shared four goals – the home side doing well to pull back a 2-0 deficit, thanks to Lea Coulter and Kevin Hyde. **Winslow United**, who have been on the end of a couple of heavy defeats recently, turned the tables with a resounding 7-1 win away at **Bedford Town Reserves**. **Amersham Town** suffered their second successive reverse, an unfortunate OG from Shayne Chandler causing the 1-0 home loss to **Cheshunt Reserves**.

### DIVISION TWO ROUND UP

No change in the top three placings, as all three challengers continued their winning ways. Leaders **Kent Athletic**, with two goals apiece from Nathan Miller and Felix Keyemeh, ran out 4-1 winners away at **Totternhoe**. **Kings Langley** had a convincing 5-1 home win against **Risborough Rangers**, and **Tring Corinthians** kept the pressure on with a 4-0 away win at pointless **Old Bradwell United**, thanks to a brace each from Luke Byrne and Joynul Hoque. The days biggest win came from **Crawley Green**, with a 10-0 demolition of **Padbury Utd** – James Potter and Danny Wilson scoring four apiece, whilst **Caddington** ran in six without reply at home to **Markyate**. **AFC Dunstable** moved up into fourth place with a 3-0 away win at **Mursley United**, in front of 61 spectators, the

division's biggest gate of the day, and a Tony Mendicino goal three minutes from time gave **Aston Clinton** a share of the spoils in a 1-1 draw with **The 61 FC**.

### **GROUNDS FOR CONCERN**

Ruislip Manor's home FA Vase game against Colney Heath was switched to the Colney Heath ground as the Manor's ground failed an inspection deadline set for last Tuesday by the FA. A delegation from the SSMFL and the Middlesex County FA visited the ground again on Saturday, and although some remedial work had been carried out, it was not deemed satisfactory, and the ground continues to be shut until further notice. This ban applies to all fixtures, be they FA, County FA, SSMFL, or Suburban League.

### **NEW MANAGER FOR LONDON COLNEY**

The Blue Boys have appointed Jason Hatton as caretaker manager for the immediate future. Hatton joined the club in the summer as assistant to Phil Childs, and along with his assistant Jim Betts, has been tasked with the challenge of guiding Colney away from the foot of the Premier Division table.

### **ERIC'S IN THE DOGHOUSE!**

Addendums to Eric Harrison's list of referees who moved onwards and upwards should include Barry Firmin (the Association's President!) who made it to the middle of the Contributory Leagues and the Football League line, and Ron James who became a Level 3 (before Eric's time, he says), moved on to Level 2 and a Football League Assistant, (coming off this year) before reverting back to a 3, where he is now.

### **CHARITY FOOTBALL MATCH**

As a tribute to former Deputy Chairman Stewart Edwards, Hoddesdon Town F.C. are holding a Charity football match at Lowfields on **SUNDAY 7 OCTOBER** – KO 4.00pm between two teams of ex Hoddesdon Town players. All proceeds from the match will be donated to the Charity being supported this year by the Mayor of the Borough of Broxbourne, the Isabel Hospice in Welwyn Garden City.

### **A MONTH IN THE LIFE OF A REFEREES' SECRETARY**

*By Mick Ewen*

With something in the region of 250 match officials for the current season, it would seem that the referees' secretary's job is cut and dried. How wrong can you be!!

Unfortunately it doesn't work out like that, as they are not all available every Saturday. I wish they were! Many officials, from level 5 downwards officiate on another league or in some cases, two or even three. All level 4's are governed by the Football Association, which means quite simply, I can only appoint my level 4's after the FA have finished appointing them as assistants to the contributory leagues. The league kindly gave me a laptop computer to go with the job. On this everything concerning officials and games are entered into it, so each month I have to do the following:

Firstly, both Phil Rolt and Eric Harrison give me all the fixtures for the following month. These are entered onto the laptop, in any order and once complete, they are juggled around and put in the correct order, date, and division. (The laptop does that for me).

Now comes the fun bit. I am able to ascertain who and what officials are available on a daily basis. This only works if the said official closes the dates be it for FA, or County appointments, personal reasons or other competitions.

I then appoint officials to the games, which believe it or not can actually take some 8 to 10 hours. However, often this doesn't include level 4's, the lads who referee the Premier Division matches. The reason for this is because when I'm ready to do the appointments for the Spartan South Midlands League, the FA are still appointing my lads to the contributory games. Still with me?

Occasionally, this missing part of the jigsaw does fall into place and I can do the lot at the same time. Now add another 3-4 hours. Once complete I send it all off to Jim Bean who then prints them for me into a little booklet. Coupled with this is a 'Referees Noticeboard,' which I'll talk about later. Jim, once he has printed the booklet, then contacts DHL who deliver the same to my house within 24 hours of picking them up.

The bulletin, which is done each month, consists of dos and don'ts, rollicking, advice, tips and anything else I want to tell the officials about. Because I get carried away at times, it goes into a minimum of three to four pages and always ends with five fascinating facts for the month. A little idea that raises a few smiles and the odd giggle or two.

Once I have the booklets back, I then put an acceptance card in each one, place into an envelope and stick the reliable address label on the front. Coupled with a stamp or two, I then find about 5 post boxes so that I can post them. Do that 250 times and you know about it! Hey presto, that's it then?

Like anything else in life, it's not that simple. The lads have six working days to get their acceptance cards back to me and now the fun really starts.

This is when I find out its granny's birthday, their cousins wedding or any other reason they can come up with! Most of the time, I'm happy to say, there isn't a real problem. Mistakes do occur, whereby they forget to tell me about a closed date, or I might make the mistake at my end, although I don't tell them that!!

With master sheet in hand, the old highlighter comes out - Green for accepting, yellow for not. I then put all the new closed dates into the computer for that month and the next one. I then have to put all the acceptance of appointments into the laptop, so I'm now working my master sheet and the laptop. Are you still with me?

Also I usually have on average about 30 emails every day, on my home PC. Often there are more and these usually consist of new open dates and other closed dates. Address and phone number changes, or just simple refereeing matters, which need to be dealt with practically straight away.

That's it then? All done? Far from it, the fun is still happening. Cry offs, for late county or FA appointments, toothache, pulled muscles, 'eadaches, you name it I'll get it at sometime or another. Cryptic messages left on the answer phone, which are often deciphered at 2am in the morning.

All changes to appointments are made in the preceding week, that way I can keep a close watch on the situation, usually on a Sunday, Emails are sent to both officials and clubs alike and the rest is up to them. I have a handbook which is permanently kept in my car, every time I go to work, both the laptop and the master sheet come with me, so that I can do any other work that is necessary, including more changes, because this time someone has cried off due to work commitments or suchlike.

That's it then, surely? Nope. All the result sheets from every game come into me and they are entered onto the laptop. This gives me the running average mark of all the officials, referees and assistants alike. Then Terry Gilmore will send me all the weekly marks that clubs give to match referee. These are also entered into the laptop.

Conversations take place regularly with the assessing coordinator, Tony Weight. Which referee needs to be looked at? I have meetings to attend, both with the League and the referees association of which the officials are very proud.

I am always available at the end of the phone. Some officials need guidance (No doubt most clubs will say they **all** need guidance!). They need advice, rollickings and in the odd case a little help. I have to wear my Dear Jane hat occasionally and try to point them in the right direction.

Clubs often have queries and contact me. Fortunately I have an excellent relationship with all the clubs, and we'll often try to put the refereeing and discipline world to rights, and then we'll try and sort out the particular problem.

I go to a game in the league every Saturday and in midweek, usually a Tuesday, sometimes to assess the referee, or just to watch. Whatever, I'll always have a pint in the bar afterwards.

I am often to be found burning the midnight oil. A method to my madness though, as the phone doesn't ring at one o'clock in the morning!! Not only that, there is nothing better to be sat at the computer with a nice scotch & coke at my side!

Hang on; the phone's ringing again, so I'll have to go. Would I have it any other way? No, not really, it's a hobby and I love it!!

My go thanks to all contributors, particularly Mick Ewen, for his insight into the workings of a Referees Secretary. Mind you, if 4 referees turn up to one of your games, you can probably blame it on too many late night scotches & cokes!! As always, all news, views, articles etc are very welcome.

Finally, our best wishes go to **Chalfont St. Peter**, our sole remaining club in the FA Cup, in their tie next Sunday at Dulwich Hamlet, one of the giants of the amateur (as it was then) Isthmian League. Although now in Ryman Division One south, I'm glad to see they still retain their traditional navy blue and pink colours, and still play at the Champion Hill ground, even if its not the original ground!

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