

MOLTEN SPARTAN SOUTH MIDLANDS FOOTBALL LEAGUE

NEWSLETTER No. 9

By Bill Scholes

After the glut of hat tricks last weekend, there were just two on Saturday, and both in the Berks & Bucks Intermediate Cup. Ryan Wiffin notched three for Winslow United as they walloped Walton Court Wanderers 6-3 and Ben Ashby scored 3 as Holmer Green Reserves beat Stokenchurch 4-1.

FA VASE – FIRST ROUND PROPER

Out of the 18 SSMFL sides contesting this round, we would like to congratulate the 9 that have progressed through to the Second Round and will eagerly await the draw on Monday. One game did not take place, which was Kingsbury London Tigers v Romford, as the FA are investigating a claim that the Tigers played a player who was serving a Middlesex FA suspension in their previous rounds win over Hatfield.

There were 4 all SSMFL ties, and probably the greatest upset came from Division One side **Amphill Town**, who made home advantage pay with a 4-1 win over **Colney Heath**. Christian Lester gave the home side an early lead and further goals from Stuart Reynolds and Lester again, increased the lead to 3-0 with just over an hour gone. The visitors pulled one back with 15 minutes left, but Martin Wells's 90th minute goal was the icing on the cake. **Biggleswade United** relied on Robbie O'Dell for their 53rd minute winner away to **Leverstock Green**, although the striker did miss a penalty right on the stroke of time and **Royston Town** won the battle of the Division One basement sides by defeating **Harpenden Town** 2-1. Harpenden did take the lead in the first half through Chris Gregory, but Graham Tibbals maintained his goals scoring exploits in this competition by putting away Peter Chappell's pass some 10 minutes later. Substitute David McMurragh saw the Crows safely home with a scrambled diving header with just 15 minutes left. Reinstated **Sun Postal Sports** might have wished they hadn't been as they crashed out 7-1 away to **Hanwell Town**. Goals in each half from Danny Beech and Scott Atkinson saw **Brimsdown Rovers** come through a tricky tie away against Essex Senior Leaguers **Barkingside**, whilst **Harefield United** required extra time to see off another Essex side **Bowers & Pitsea**. Robert Ursell scored the Hares goal in normal time, and Sean Sonner and Ben Hammond came up trumps in extra time for a 3-1 win. **Tring Athletic** faced a hard task away to **Stotfold**, who had just put Chesham United out of the FA Cup, but it was bottoms up from Ian Wilkinson as a strike from Greg Shaw rebounded off Wilkinson's rear to ensure Tring's passage into the next round. **Chalfont St. Peter** seemed to be home and hosed after 47 minutes leading, 3-0 with goals from Bradley Bubb (2) and Martin Deeley in their tie with **Bicester Town** but the visitors fought back in the second half with two goals to make it a slightly nervy ending. **Cockfosters** had to overcome the handicap of playing with only 10 men following Samson Okeke's dismissal just before half time, but a superb second half performance saw them run out 2-1 winners to Combined Counties side **Bedfont Green**. Cockfosters took the lead halfway through the first half, when the Bedfont keeper parried a shot from Ben Andreos into the path of Ben Penfold who made no mistake, but the lead lasted just two minutes before a header from James Hennessey brought the visitors level. The Cockfosters hero was full back Liam Kenna, who scored the winner with just under twenty minutes left. Both contestants in the **Holmer Green v Brockenhurst** tie entered the game buoyed by excellent mid week wins – Holmer overwhelming Shrivensham 6-2 in the B&B Senior Trophy, whilst visitors Brockenhurst had a great 2-1 win over Wessex League leaders Poole- and for the first quarter of an hour there was little between the two teams. However once Holmer keeper Dave Clark turned a speculative cross from the right into his own net, the Badgers began to dominate. The Holmer attacks frequently foundered on the rock that was the visitors keeper, and Kevin Reacord, whose last Vase appearance was in the Final at Wembley playing for AFC Totton, was a constant thorn in the Holmer defence and it was no surprise that he eventually ended up with a hat trick, the fourth goal coming from Simon Young. **Welwyn Garden City** were unlucky to come away from their trip to **Long Buckby** with nothing to show for their efforts. They took their hosts to extra time, Richard Morton's goal nullifying the United Counties side early lead, and hopes were raised when Carl Ashton put them in front in the first period of extra time, but Buckby struck back with two goals in 5 minutes to seal the

tie. **Beaconsfield SYCOB** were on the end of an 11 minute hat trick from Lee Keyes of **Highworth Town** but a courageous second half revival brought two goals from Michael Currie and Adrian Sear, but the vital third goal eluded them. **Hertford Town** were boosted by the recent signing of midfielder Matt McArdle from Welwyn in advance of their difficult away tie against **Concord Rangers**, but with leading scorer Kevin Cooper out injured, found life difficult against a strong Essex Senior League side and went down 2-0 – the homesters scoring a goal in each half.

PREMIER DIVISION ROUND UP – SAT 6 OCTOBER

Only three games last Saturday, and **Biggleswade Town** took the opportunity to make up ground and move up into third place with a 2-1 home victory over **Ruislip Manor**. The game was goalless up until the 69th minute when Scott Field gave the Waders the lead, but Manor must have thought they had gained a valuable point when powerful front-runner Aaron McLeish equalised with just three minutes left. However, drama right at the end, as Manor's Chris Henry put through his own goal to give the home side all three points, and once again leave Manor feeling robbed. The day's biggest winners were **Langford**, who won 3-1 away at **Oxhey Jets**, moving up 7 places to 11th in the process. The Jets took the lead after just 8 minutes, only for Ross Scotney to level the scores in the 23rd minute, but Langford's recovery was completed in the second half with two goals from Wes Byrne. In the only other match in the Premier, **Aylesbury Vale** eschewed the chance to go up to second place, as they lost 1-0 at home to **Broxbourne Borough**, Saf Pivano getting Boro's winner with 18 minutes left.

DIVISION ONE ROUND UP

All change at the top, as **Haringey Borough** swept into pole position with an emphatic 4-1 win away to **Bedford Town Reserves**, thanks to a brace from Daniel Iroegbu and singles from Adeniyi Adedeji and Michael Ingle-Clark. Last week's leaders **Bedford** slipped back to third as they lost 2-1 away to **Hoddesdon Town** who moved up into to 5th place. Along with Haringey, Hoddesdon are the only other unbeaten team in the division, and they had Andy Martin and Lee Knight to thank for their two goals. Bedford's reply was a 74th minute penalty from Graham Randall. **Brache Sparta** held on to second place with a hard fought 3-2 home win over second from bottom **Cranfield United**, the vital winning goal coming in the 90th minute. Earlier Brache had taken the lead through Lee Hayward after 26 minutes, but Cranfield fought back strongly in the second half with goals from Mark Keogh and Shearer (presumably not Alan) to lead 2-1 after an hour. Cranfield then scored another – unfortunately it was at the wrong end – and Dean Whitaker became Brache's hero right on time. Elsewhere, **Sport e Benfica** won 4-1 away at **Arlesey Athletic**, whilst **Cheshunt Reserves** returned from **Kentish Town** with a 4-2 win under their belt.

DIVISION TWO ROUND UP

Just the one league game, and it saw **Kings Langley** extend their lead at the top of the Division to 5 points as they won 1-0 away to **Totternhoe** – Andy Cooper's goal just over the half hour mark gaining all three points.

LEAGUE ATTENDANCE FIGURES – AUG + SEPT

In the Premier Division, Hertford Town are leading the way with an average attendance of 104, the only club to be over the 100 mark. Next up were Harefield Utd, averaging 86, followed by Langford on 74 and Beaconsfield SYCOB on 70. Just below the 70 mark are Colney Heath and Tring Athletic, both with 68. Five clubs are averaging less than 40 – Kingsbury London Tigers have the lowest on 33, followed by Welwyn Garden City with 35, Biggleswade Town 37, Leverstock Green 38 and Holmer Green 39. The highest individual attendance was 149 at Hertford Town for the visit of local rivals Welwyn Garden City, whilst Harefield (twice), Langford and Beaconsfield have all chalked up 100+ attendances.

Three clubs in Division One are averaging over 50 – at the top are Amphill Town with 56, Winslow 54, and New Bradwell St. Peter 52, whilst Hoddesdon are knocking on the door with 49. Only one

recorded attendance of over 100 and that was at Winslow (110) for the visit of local rivals Buckingham Athletic. At the bottom, both Brache Sparta and Harpenden must be disappointed with their average attendances of 9 and 10 respectively, with both clubs achieving an individual low of 6. The league leaders in Division Two, Kings Langley, are pulling in the biggest crowds, averaging 49 for their home games, followed by Mursley Utd on 46 and Caddington with 44. Best crowd to date was 64 at Kings Langley, for their top of the table clash with Kent Athletic. At the other end of the spectrum, just 5 people attended The 61 FC's home game with Totternhoe.

LEVERSTOCK GREEN YOUTH TEAM

Congratulations go to Leverstock Green's Youth Team, who won their third FA Youth Cup on the trot on Monday night, beating Welwyn Garden City 4-2. They are now through to the 3rd Qualifying Round, where they will meet either Grays Athletic or Romford. There were excellent victories in the first two rounds over sides from 3 levels above Green in the Pyramid – firstly they dispatched Bishops Stortford 5-2 and followed that with a 4-0 thumping of St. Albans. Two young hotshots making their name for the Greens are Elijah Bell (7 goals) and Jamie Sharples (6 goals)

CHARITY BEGINS AT HODDESDON TOWN!

When Hoddesdon Town's Deputy Chairman Stewart Edwards died in February 2006 aged just 54, the Club lost not only a valued Officer, but also a close and dear friend to everyone who had been in contact with him in nearly 14 years at the Club. Last year nearly thirty former players took part in a charity match against a current side and £1050 was raised for the Leonard Cheshire Home in Dorchester. All the players asked to do the same in 2007, but this time they wanted to stage a match between two sets of former players, and forty of them responded. This year, the charity chosen by the Mayor of Broxbourne, Cllr. Charles Tranham, was the Isabel Hospice in Welwyn Garden City, and so that became the theme for the day. An excellent game of football transpired between the old and the not so old and the game fittingly finished at 4-4, but the final score didn't matter, it was the occasion that drew everyone to Lowfield, **and as a result of the fund-raising activities on the day, the fantastic sum of £1,100 was raised for the Isabel Hospice through the Mayor's Fund.** To round off the day, former Lilywhite goalkeeper John 'the Cat' Catherall and six members of his top showband Souled Out, treated all the members, players and friends to an energetic hour of soul classics in the Lowfield clubhouse

FA VASE – SECOND ROUND DRAW

Ties to be played Sat 17 November

There are 64 games to be played in the Second Round of the FA Vase, with the winners of each game being entitled to £1000 prize money. We have 9 clubs definitely involved at this stage, with the possibility of a 10th dependent on the outcome of the FA enquiry regarding Kingsbury London Tigers. Unfortunately 4 of our clubs have been drawn together, and whilst this guarantees at least two entries into the third round, it does mean that two potentially strong candidates will be eliminated. The draw, as it affects our clubs, is listed below:

Hanwell Town v Cogenhoe United, Newmarket Town v **Biggleswade United**, **Ampthill Town** v Burnham Ramblers, **Kingsbury London Tigers** or Romford v **Cockfosters**, **Royston Town** v Ipswich Wanderers, **Chalfont St. Peter** v **Harefield United** and **Brimmsdown Rovers** v **Tring Athletic**

Don't forget that there is some sort of game going on at Wembley this Saturday with a 3.00pm kick off. Some of our games have changed their KO times; so if you are out and about, don't forget to check before you travel.

All contributions /news/views/items of interest gratefully received. Please send to:

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