

THE MERTON WAY



MERTON FOOTBALL CLUB
ISSUE 7 - 28 OCTOBER 2016



NEVER FORGOTTEN

I was getting ready to write a nice upbeat introduction to this week's Merton Way about fielding seven teams on a Saturday, a lively bar and a thriving club when the news came through about Nick Papanastasiou's untimely death and it all pales into insignificance. A really great lad, good keen footballer and member and he will be sadly missed. Our thoughts are with Chris and all his family and friends. And that includes all of us at Merton who had the pleasure to know him. So this weekend we will remember him and miss him and we will continue to miss him and grieve for a long time. He really was a special young man.



Nick: part of the Merton 3s dream team of 2014/2015

A TRIBUTE TO A TRUE BOAR

This edition of the Merton Way is dedicated to Nick Papanastasiou, a true boar who we sadly lost last week in a tragic accident whilst he was on his travels in Vietnam.

Those of us that knew Nick would agree that you will never meet a more happy-go-lucky guy whose big cheeky smile and positivity never failed to lift those around him. The outpouring of love from the 100s of messages and photos posted on his Facebook page are testament to this. “Loyal”, “One of a Kind” “Talented” “Charming” “Energetic” and “Intelligent”, are just a few words that help to paint a picture of the kind of guy he was.

For someone of his age, Nick was a fountain of knowledge in a wide range of subjects, but undoubtedly his passion was in fitness and nutrition. He spent many hours explaining to me and anyone who would listen the benefits of eating the diet of a caveman and the best ways to “jack” your testosterone levels through exercise and eating animal fats! He is the only player I have ever known to do a 2 hour Olympic lift and squat session the night before a big game, cycle 7 miles from home to the match at the Hood on a Saturday afternoon and still be the freshest player on the pitch. When most players are struggling to walk after a game he would just hop onto his bike, usually to a friend’s BBQ for some meat (no carbs). I would challenge someone to remember a time off the pitch where he wasn’t holding a protein shake or a packet of pre-cooked chicken from Sainsbury’s.

As far as his football goes, Nick could really play - even when he was turning up after a heavy night at Fabric, running on fumes, with only after half an hour sleep! He had excellent movement, a great pass and



Nick the Rebel: the only one not in a polo shirt! He should have been fined



Nick: he did like a polo shirt though

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could find the back of the net when half a chance presented itself. The 3rd of October 2015 springs to mind, where, away to Merton 3's rivals Old Parkonians, we were approaching half time, when Merton, against the run of play took the lead with Chris P, Nick's brother playing his part by nudging the goalkeeper (who had run miles out of goal for some reason) off the ball, which then fell to Nick, who still with a lot to do lifted the ball over the stranded keeper from 35-40 yards for a delightful finish to put the Boars 1-0 up at half time. It's a shame this exquisite goal from Nick wasn't emulated by the team in the second half and Merton ended up well beaten at 5-1 when the final whistle went. Nonetheless a memorable goal that is etched into the minds of the Merton 3s dream team of 14/15.

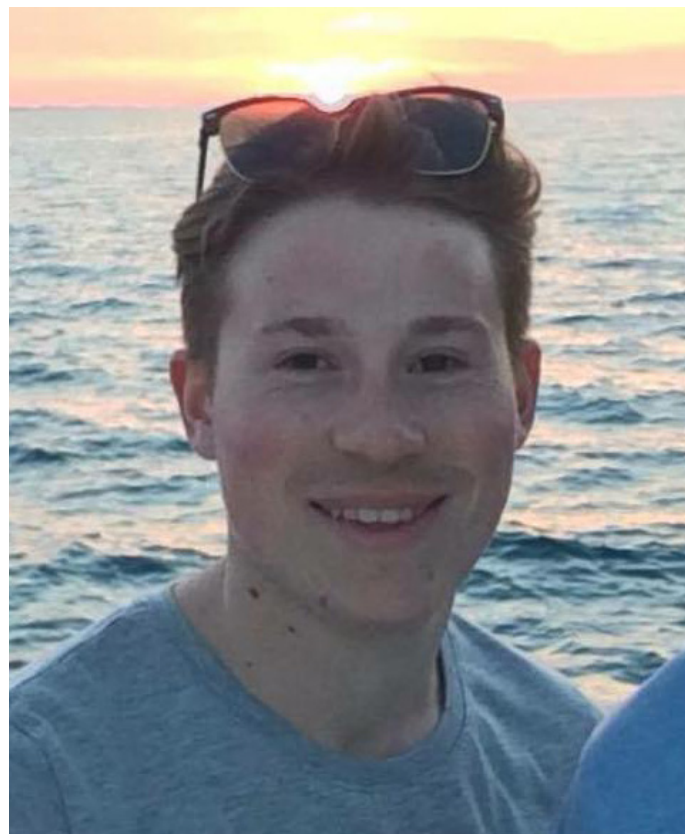
As a friend and a teammate he had a great personality, excellent banter and was completely loyal. I've shared so many great memories with Nick, the infamous weekend in Berlin, Copenhagen, Skiing in Les Deux Alps, and Flaine to name just a few. He really knew how to live life to it's full, seek adventure and find the funny side to everything.

On the Merton 2 and 3s WhatsApp group the heartfelt tributes in response to the premature loss of our friend has been overwhelming and it's clear that Nick will be sorely missed. His bother Chris has expressed a wish to do something within the club to commemorate Nick at some point in the future but in the meantime we will be holding a minute's silence before all games on Saturday as a mark of respect.

Last week we lost a brother, a great friend, a teammate and a true boar. Let's show our respect by going out there this week and making him proud.

I'm going to miss ya buddy

Tom



Nick: a great guy to many, on and off the pitch

THINGS TO KNOW

RUBBISH

It is important we remember that our home ground is a public park and we need to be careful with our language and also our rubbish.

From this Saturday a dustbin will be provided out on the pitch and please put your empty bottles, tape and trash at the end of the game.

FIRST AID

We take the safety of our members very seriously and as a Charter Standard club we have to ensure that proper first aid kits with each match and certificated first aiders in each team.

- we need the Manager/Captain to check the first aid kit and ensure it has adequate contents
- any player with any health issues such as allergies/asthma/epilepsy/heart issues should disclose these to the captain before the game. (inhalers are important for asthma)
- We also will be running an Emergency Aid training course in November at the Hood and we need volunteers to sign up for that.

TRAINING

LOCATION: St Mark's Academy School, Acacia Road, Mitcham CR4 1SF

TIME: 8pm-9.30pm on Wednesday evenings.
(please arrive by 7.30pm to stretch and warm up)

SURFACE: Astro-turf: please wear appropriate footwear

Each is responsible for their own physical fitness. Attendance at training is encouraged and preferable but not yet compulsory, however training is likely to affect team selection and there may be occasions when attendance is required.

HOW TO GET THERE:

TRAIN: Mitcham Eastfields train station is a five minute walk from the pitches and trains from Victoria, Clapham Junction and Balham.

When you exit the station, walk up Grove Road with the school on your right. Just after the new building, there is a path on your right signposted '**Entrance to Adventure Playground**' which brings you to the pitches.

CAR: Acacia Road is off Tamworth Lane. Drive all the way to the end of Acacia Road, with the school on your left, follow the road around to the left and you reach the entrance to the pitches.

1s

MERTON FC 0 EBOG 0

After the disappointment of last week's away defeat, we were keen to change said fortunes around. Back to the fortress Hood. Both Sam and Jonny on time, a good omen right? Even before starting the warm up, news of an Injury on the far pitch meant a 15 minute delay to the start of the game. Thus a chance for us to go through Clappers dynamic warm up. Why so many squats? Why do the lines cross? No wonder I shout at him.

Personally, from last week's performance, the main reason we came away empty handed, aside from Woody/De Bruyne/Aguero and pals penalty antics was the lack of bite all over the pitch. We welcomed back Sam, Tilley and Nick in the midfield which was a needed boost. The emphasis was to start quickly and make sure we competed physically. However the first 15 minutes belonged fully to EBOG. They passed the ball very quickly and were direct in their play. Their number 10 made some incisive runs, but just couldn't finish. Siri with a couple of blocks one on one. I think the general consensus was that it would only be a matter of time before they scored as we could not get a foot hold in the game. However this eased as we started to play the ball around more. Both Jonny and Milo found success against their opponents and Charlie had the beating of his man every time. Charlie had a glimpse of goal in the first half and was probably unlucky not to hit the target when he had a little more time. Chaz scoring from a free header from 5 yards out would have been the icing on the cake, however as against IBIS, he has a tendency to head wide.

While the first 15 belonged to EBOG, the rest of the first half definitely belonged to us. They started to give away needless fouls and get on the referees back which only worked in our favour. Come half time, the message was to go again. Keep up the same intensity. Shout out to Nick for being a calming influence on the side line for Harrison.

Again we started the second half brightly, the three up top all providing great out balls. However we started to fade from around 55 minutes in and EBOG came back into the game. Again their number 10 had the beating of our back four, but couldn't put countless chances away. (See Ballotelli vs Manchester United 2014). The game became very open and we started to create clearer cut chances. Chaz picking up the ball from a throw at right back forced his way to the right wing, laid the ball off to Jonny and made the run into the box, Jonny found him with an inch perfect ball and from 5 yards out he ballooned over. Typical Chaz. EBOG created a couple more chances, but were dealt with by Siri/ the back four.

The last 15 minutes were all about Merton. Again from another corner Chaz staying up top, chested the ball down and re-enacted Frank Sinclair vs Barnsley, only to be denied by the bar. The chances were coming thick and fast, Jonny again ghosted past their right back and with three lining up on the penalty spot, tried to beat the keeper at the near post. James also impressed in his cameo as he often does. He was unlucky not to curl past the keeper with the last kick of the game.

Overall a good point earned, as both teams could have won the game, but a feeling that we probably had done enough to nick it. Every player put in a shift against the best opposition so far this

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season. Very much an improved display from the week before. Many positives to take forward. Man of the match was Chaz. Very well deserved as he has put in a number of strong performances recently. DOTD was a difficult one at first as there were no real mistakes/errors. Missing two chances from 5 yards out is cardinal sin though, so Chaz has the fortune of also being DOTD.

TEAM: Siri (GK), Kearnsy, Chaz, Clappers, Browner, Sam, Tills, Woody, Milo, Charlie, Jonny

SUBS: James Laughton, Nick

MAN OF THE MATCH: Chaz

DICK OF THE DAY: Chaz

2s

MERTON FC 2 NUFC OILERS 7

Following two very unfortunate and undeserved cup defeats in three weeks, Merton went into yet another cup game on Saturday against Nottingham University Oilers. Despite knowing the quality of the opposition, the Boars approached the match in good spirits, eager to take their last chance at a cup run this season.

Unfortunately they never really got going, and found themselves 1-0 down within minutes of the kick-off following quick, intricate build up play from the opposition. It was a pace of play that, in truth, Merton struggled to keep up with for most of the first half, and although at times looking like they might grab a foothold in the game, ended up 3-0 down at the break with few arguments offered.

That being said, it is a testament to the spirit and burgeoning togetherness of the group that words at half time were calm rather than angry and encouraging instead of critical. An improved early second half performance saw, after conceding a fourth goal, Merton get one back as Ben Cook - who shrugged off a back injury to play a good spell in midfield - lofted a lovely ball over the top of the defence that Wilgo put away with aplomb. A birthday goal for the Merton captain.

A reshuffle of the team due to injury then saw the Boars rather lose their shape for the remainder of the game, and caution was well and truly thrown to the wind. Three more goals were conceded before Glenn pulled another back with a wonderfully creative / incredibly lucky (depending on who you ask) cross-come-shot that was planted in the top corner. Further chances to add some respectability to the score-line were spurned after yours truly missed a difficult header from a great Wilgo cross and then five minutes later somehow failed to score from six yards out as the ball was fired across from the right wing. Was I still feeling the effects of having been hit in the bollocks following what can only be described as a valiant, self-sacrificing and brave block in the first half? Who can definitively say? Me, and yes I was.

So, a disappointing result overall against a team that simply outclassed us on the day. Nonetheless, we left with spirits in decent fettle and with determination to kick-start our league campaign next week. Onwards and upwards.

MAN OF THE MATCH: Glenn, who's goal was considered "genius" by enough people to win him the honour.

DICK OF THE DAY: Me, mostly for the miss, partly for getting hit in the bollocks.

3s

MERTON FC 2 OLD FINCHLEIANS 3

The day started as usual with a vigorous warm up running side to side on the pitch dominated mainly by the 12 players trying to learn each other's names (of the 12 only 3 played the week before and there were a couple of debutants). Once the game had kicked off the Boars, starting out with a 442 formation, were straight on the front foot keeping the ball and creating a couple of half chances. After 15 minutes of back and forth the game kicked in to life when a relatively easy one on one save by the Boars keeper (Gubby or Gabby who you will hear about again in due course...) and quick throw out to Alex at left back, led to a counter attack goal smartly finished over an oncoming keeper by DK

After a couple of half chanced by the opposition, a free kick was given away on the edge of the Boars box which was smartly converted over the 4 man wall in to the top corner of the Boars net to draw the game level. The Boars lost their early momentum at this point and when another free kick was given away, a ball deep in to the Boars box found an unmarked opposition player who converted his free header back across the goal to make it 1-2.

After two goals in relatively quick succession, the Boars started to find their feet again winning a free kick in a similar position to the last won by the opposition and an equally delicious delivery led to a carbon copy header by Ross to level things up at 2-2. Ross nearly turned provider as he broke down the left and managed to square the ball across the box towards DK for a tap in, only for the keeper to get a hand to it and divert it away. All agreed as we went in to half time that the Boars had had the better of the first half and if not for a 10 minute period of set piece madness or if we had converted some of our numerous half chances, we could have been in front. One chance in particular stands out.

Unfortunately, the Boars didn't come out in the first half with the same momentum and the opposition were on the front foot from the kick-off, aided by the opposition keepers superhuman kick distance. This guy was reaching the edge of the Boars box or further with kicks off the floor and out of his hands, playing to the height advantage the Boars were giving to the opposition on the day. After about 20 minutes of half chances from the opposition, the Boars keeper (told you that you would hear about him again) spooned a goal-kick to the opposition forward and then followed the mistake up by not winning the following challenge with the striker, giving him an open net to put the opposition up 3-2.

The opposition continued with the pressure for the rest of the half after the Boars reverted to a more familiar (as I am told) 4-3-3 formation. Apart from a few half chances, Andy L having a shot blocked on the line by a combination of keeper and defender and a few other half chances that all seemed to get blocked before they could finish their path to the top corner of the oppositions net, the Boars didn't really threaten the opposition keeper enough. Gubby was given the chance to turn from zero to hero (kind of) by pulling out a Gordon Banksesque save to get down and tip what should have been a tap in from 6 yards around the post. A few more saves towards the end of the game kept the score at 3-2, but in truth the second half performance was the Boars downfall on the day.

Some positives can defiantly be taken from the performance. On a day where the team knew each

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other better, a couple of half chances had been converted and fitness was maybe at a higher level, the Boars could have walked away with at least a point from a game like this.

Bad result, but we didn't really deserve anything if we are honest.

TEAM: Gubby, Gabby, Mustard, Vin, Alex, Neal, Darcy, Andy L, DK, Denys, Iain, Ross

MAN OF THE MATCH: Gubby

DICK OF THE DAY: Gubby – A rare double on debut of keeping a team in it and throwing it away for them

4s

MERTON FC 2 WEST WICKHAM 3

Fresh off a much-needed win the previous week in the Cup, it was back to league matters for the Merton 4s against West Wickham at the Hood. The game was delayed owing to a horror injury for Tom Reid (wishes from all of us for a speedy recovery mate), but the game did eventually get going about half an hour late.

Dan Gridley was missing this week, which was a shame, but a similar formation was adopted with Will sitting in as a midfield screen once again. It became apparent within the first few minutes that it would be a game of few chances though, with both teams very evenly matched - almost cancelling each other out. But Merton were giving as good as they got, looking solid in defence, and occasionally threatening with their pacy legs upfront.

But as has become typical, they conceded an awful first goal that came largely against the run of play, effectively undoing their good work. An entirely innocuous cross came in; Mike left it thinking Kieran was coming to claim, the ball bounced awkwardly between the two, and the striker, who couldn't believe his luck, bundled it over the line.

A clusterfuck really, but it had nothing on the second goal. Once again an awkward ball came in over the defence. Again it bounced awkwardly, and the striker nodded it onto the crossbar - somewhat gently. Kieran did well to get a palm to the rebound, but succeeded only in doing so onto the back of the unsuspecting striker's head. And, as is the way, this inadvertent 'header' somehow found it's way into the goal.

2-0 down. Unbelievable Jeff. West Wickham had barely had a shot in anger! It was cruel on Merton, but now they simply just had to find a way to get back into it.

And they did just that. The spirits stayed up, the work rate never dropped, and, after a good sustained 10-minute period of plugging away, the reward came. Carl dinked a delightful ball through for Dom, who ran onto it with his usual ease and grace. Even from a tight angle, there was only ever going to be one outcome, and he slotted it past the keeper to pull it back to 2-1.

Merton pushed hard for an equaliser before the half, but, in truth, it was mostly with long balls and crosses, which their keeper had no problems dealing with.

At the break, the talk was positive; rueing the shambolic and unfortunate goals conceded, but with the belief that, with a bit more ball on ground football, a victory lay in wait.

Unfortunately, soon after proceedings resumed, the curse of the cheap goal struck yet again. Wickham won a free kick in a dangerous position, but the delivery was fairly bog standard. However, with a clever dummy run by one of their strikers, Kieran was put off, and the ball went directly into the net.

3-1. So unfortunate again, but also very frustrating. The visitors had barely carved out a single decent opportunity, and yet somehow had three goals to their credit.

Infuriating as it was, Merton just had to keep going. And they did just that, in fairness. No one switched off, solid work at the back provided a good base from which to build and everyone to a man worked their socks off. Ryan Burchell came on and provided a good outlet down the right too, and although much of the game was being played in midfield, Merton used the space out wide well, and got to the bylines on numerous occasions.

Chances were few and far between though. Ryan had one effort which went just over the crossbar, while

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Dom was well thwarted a few times having latched onto some scraps upfront.

Merton really played some good football in the final 10, and put Wickham under immense pressure. But time was running out, and the second goal arrived a bit too late. Dom got the ball just outside their box, and played a delightful through ball to Will, who'd made a lung-busting run down the left. Will took it on the run, rounded the keeper, and did ever so well to put it away from a tight angle.

3-2, with just a couple of minutes left on the clock. Merton then threw bodies forward, but unfortunately weren't able to create anything. The whistle eventually went, and a gutting, narrow defeat was the final outcome. Undoubtedly, it was a disappointing one to lose, and things could have been so different.

But there were plenty of positives to take too, and Merton need not be too downbeat. The standard of play has improved dramatically since early season, the team spirit is far better, and you can't help but feel that a decent run of results isn't too far away.

TEAM: Kieran Lee (GK), Ed Plaistow, Mike Todt, Joe Plumridge, Will Harrison, John Gridley, Chris Outred, Joe Underwood, Cameron Brooks, Carl Kewley, Dom Plumridge

SUBS: Noor Emad, Chris Dodd, Ryan Burchell

MAN OF THE MATCH: Will Harrison

DICK OF THE DAY: Mike Todt, for the cock up in the first goal, and for giving Chris the spoon in the bar afterwards!

5s

MERTON FC 0 SOUTH BANK CUACO 3

For those of you who regularly visit the flying fives' reports to read about how much we've won by in the following week, look away now.

It had been 2 weeks since we had played as Polytechnic 9s unhelpfully called off last week. We played today like we had taken the two weeks off and gone to Ibiza, pulling an all-nighter before finally returning back to our home of Merton with puke down our shirt, blinded by the sunlight and still trying to find our friend named "Doug". It was a performance that was reminiscent of last year, and one that we must be focused on reversing in the next game.

Their first goal saw the oppo player run onto a bouncing ball from just outside the 18 yard box. With Lenner committed, the player lobbed him from the left hand side to make it 1-0 after approximately 25 – 30 mins. Shortly after, they capitalised on a bit of luck. An attempted through ball hit our player and rebounded kindly to their player, who hit a lovely strike from 25 yards out that he won't do again anytime soon. The third was also a happy blend of catastrophic & unlucky. A slide tackle to block the cross rebounded off our defender, hit their player and fell kindly in the box. A good cross ended up at the feet of their striker, who scuffed what should have been an easy tap in. As the ball painfully slowly approached the line, Steve Birchall got to the ball and went to clear. Unfortunately, the clearance hit Lenner on the back of the head and went in for Lenner's second own goal of the season. Despite the luck attributed to goals 2 and 3, they deserved the 3-0 lead at half-time.

The second half started a little better, with Merton calving out our first half chances of the day. The game was marred, however, by an incredibly unfortunate, serious looking injury afflicted to Tom who was having a very good game at an unfamiliar left back position at the time. We all wish him a speedy recovery, and he will be missed whilst away. The game petered out without much incident after, with both teams creating half chances, however the game ended 3-0.

In writing this report, I have realised how refreshing it is to be bitterly disappointed by a defeat where last season it almost felt like an expectation. We have performed incredibly well as a team throughout this season and next week provides us as a shot at retribution against a Poly 8s side that will prove to be tough opposition.

6s

MERTON FC 2 OLD WILSONIANS 1

After the disappointment of the cup run which means we can no longer qualify for the next round, focused was switched back to the league where a good season is anticipated! The regulars had returned from wooing their lady friends last week and the team had a look of familiarity to the squad.

The gaffer had just about recovered from a traumatic week as he managed to get everyone a game of football and assisted in creating the new seventh team!

Anyway on to the game, Old Wilsonians 8's is a problematic fixture for us in the past and we had already lost heavily to them in the cup, so a tough game was expected.

With a good attacking team on paper it was time to put these youngsters through their paces and hopefully give them a good platform to start their adult football adventure with Merton.

Merton with pace on both flanks and up top started brightly. Every player was enjoying early touches on the ball and looking to play out from the back which was a breath of fresh air!

It wasn't long before chances were being created with Callum and Pete both going close. The midfield pair of Ty and Chris dominated and made it difficult for Wilsons to create many chances.

Midway through the first half Merton got the breakthrough. A superb, long and accurate throw in from Skipper (and report writer!) found Paul in the area who superbly turned and shot (or crossed) and the ball looped over the keeper into the net, 1-0 Merton.

After we scored Wilson's began to up their game and Merton were on the back foot. Dangerous free kicks were given away and their wingers were starting to stretch the play. Inevitably disaster struck and Wilsonians scored. Good play from their winger who managed to slip past Ram and set up their striker one on one with Swanny who managed to dink it over him and with the skipper anticipating this, tried to clear off the line but got the faintest of touches to no avail. Some of the squad are saying this was an own goal, but I'm not having it!

After dominating the play we were left wondering if this was going to be one of those days! Our heads slightly dropped and our crisp play was starting to desert us.

Then the moment of controversy in the game. If this was the premier league this would have been on all the back pages and still be talked about in years to come!! Wilsons broke and with Smithy not sure whether to go ball or runner left them both! Wilsons were in behind (calm down John!) and after a squared ball we were all waiting for the net to bulge and be 2-1 down! However instead of simply kicking the ball in the net, the striker fell over the ball, and decided to use a hand in knocking the ball in instead – a goal was given and there was outrage (Ty should have been booked as was out of order to the ref!). This is where the spirit of the SAL comes into play and with the oppo skipper noticing the handball and striker also partially admitting it, the goal was chalked off. My hat goes off to the skipper and will make sure an email is sent to the club praising his efforts!

This seemed to finally spark Merton back into life and maybe gave us the kick up the arse we needed! After winning tackles and starting to get the ball down chances were being created again and it wasn't long before we re-took the lead, great play from Paul led to him finding Callum who cut inside and took a shot which was pushed in the net by the keeper making it 2-1 and it wasn't even half-time yet.

Half-time came and went and to be honest the second half flew by without much incident! Changes were made by Merton and all who came on had blinders! We even introduced one of the youngest players in

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Merton's history with Dylan making his debut! Chances again came and went for Merton and we should have added to our scoreline and we were still wondering if we would rue these chances. Wilsonians did have a couple of half chances but the defence stood strong and with them tiring due to no subs Merton held on for the win.

One sour note was Swanny putting his back out which could see him sidelined for a while, but up stepped the skipper to stand in goal for the final moments (when they found a proper adults shirt that fitted him!!!)

Anyway let's hope we can carry this form onto next weeks game and as I write this report numbers are high so bare with the manager!

TEAM: Swanny, Ram, Adam (Beans), Mark, Kevin, Callum, Chris, Tyrone, Paul, Pete, Trey

SUBS: Adam, George, Dylan

MAN OF THE MATCH: The whole squad played really well and this was our best game this season! But a clear winner this week was Paul – well played that man!!

DICK OF THE DAY: I am not happy about this but apparently after scoring an own goal (it wasn't) and at fault for the controversy (I didn't see the runner!) and the shirt debacle. Yes its me (Kev!) – as the saying goes "every dog has its day!"

7s

MERTON FC 5 CROUCH END VAMPIRES 1

So, a new beginning for Merton with a 7XI for the third time since 1978-1979, and for those like me, who played in the 1978/79 team! As it happens it was against Crouch End Vampires (CEV).

The team generally turned up on time and it was just a case of working out who played in each position in the classic 4-4-2. One advantage Dan was providing a goalkeeper, Jon, and the rest of the team seemed to sort itself out, until just before kick-off when we had to do a quick reshuffle.

My preparation was also hampered by trying to find a complete/clean yellow kit, but we ended up starting our new beginnings in blue.

Once the game started, we soon settled as a team and played some good football with a strong central midfield pair of David and Andrew and two youngsters Billy and Emmanuel the wing. The defence was solid: Femi, Dan, Tom and Martin, which meant Jon in goal had little to do, and Malcolm and Scott up front. We created several chances before finally breaking the deadlock after about 20 minutes with a good move finished by Emmanuel. For the rest of the half we were on top, even making two subs. We scored two further goals: a header from David G, and a shot from Scott.

At half-time, we made further changes which initially set us back a bit as we took time to settle again and Crouch End Vampires did find their feet a bit. Once we did settle we did play well again and scored again with a goal – Billy off Malcolm; a father and son scoring in the same match.

We were then forced into changes after a clash of heads between Dave G and a CEV player; both having to go off. Since CEV only had 11 players we loaned them Emmanuel for a few minutes. Scott scored a cracking second goal or was it a cross? However, I wasn't watching as I was considering further changes. CEV did get a consolation goal.

In general it was a good team performance although there are things to work upon, as we did get overrun a bit in midfield at times, however CEV did play a very attacking formation.

Many thanks to Ed Plaistow and Mike Todt for refereeing, however you are better as players! Big up to Emmanuel for helping CEV briefly; in fact he played for 3 teams on the day, none in yellow, and also to CEV for coming down from North London and staying for a few drinks.

If we are added to the league the opposition will be tougher in most cases and we will even get to play our 6s for second time in just over eleven years. However, Saturday represented a great start, and a perfect launchpad for this new-look team.

TEAM: Jon T, Femi S, Tom R, Dan A, Martin Q, Emanuel, David G, Andrew D, Billy G, Malcolm K, Scott

SUBS: Dusan B, Tiago C

GOALS: Scott (2), Emanuel, David, Billy

We didn't do Man of the Match & Dick of the Day this week but will in further weeks.

DAN BRIDGEMAN



1. Tell us who you are outside of the club. What do you do, how would you describe yourself?

I'm 24 going on 40 (apparently) and work in tax (no not for HMRC). Boring stuff aside enjoy pretty much anything sport related and generally just having a laugh with mates. At any given time outside of working hours the most likely place you'll find me is on the golf course.

2. How did you end up at Merton FC?

I graduated from Uni in 2013, moved home and after a couple of years out whilst studying professional exams I was looking for a club to get back in to the game with that didn't take themselves too seriously. Having been down for a few months now, I'm fairly comfortable Merton fits the bill.

3. What was your best moment in your MFC career till now?

I'd say probably my penalty save in the first game of the season, but mainly because it was purely down to the mind games I played on the striker psyching him out rather than it having any impact on the result.

4. If you could play for a professional team, which would be it and why?

Probably a bit of a left field choice, but I'd have to say the European Ryder Cup team. I'm crazy in to golf and I just don't think there is another sporting event like the Ryder Cup. Plus I'd love to stick it to those Yanks, especially Patrick Reed!

5. Do you have any pre-match rituals or superstitions?

I used to have a lucky undershirt as a kid up until I finished Uni (though I don't wear it anymore), but looking back I think it only stayed lucky because I only wore it when I thought we were going to win because I didn't want to lose the luckiness. These days though, the closest thing to a ritual is calling my dad for a match report post game and then ordering a curry.

6. Lastly, share us your goals/expectations for the season.

Really, I'm just looking to have some fun and get back in to football this year, I'm not putting any pressure on myself or the team, but it would be nice to avoid relegation given I think we were promoted last season with the 3s. From a personal perspective it'd nice to maintain my penalty save ratio at or above 50% where it is now too (shoot-outs don't count!).

Player of the season (so far): N/A

Childhood Team: Chelsea, played for Barnes Eagles

Favourite team in the UK: Chelsea

Favourite team outside the UK: Seattle Seahawks

Childhood Hero: Gianfranco Zola

Favourite Food: Beef Wellington

Favourite Drink: Sober – tea, drunk – Jaeger Bombs apparently!

Favourite Band: Oasis

RAPID FIRE

MIKE STONE



1. Tell us who you are outside of the club. What do you do, how would you describe yourself?

describe yourself? I work in Digital Marketing on Personalised Videos. Outside of work my hobbies include disco dance, sunbathing and ping pong.

2. How did you end up at Merton FC?

2. How did you end up at Merton FC? Clappers scouted me on the pitch at Arsenal's Emirates Stadium (true story) and the rest, as they say, is history.

3. What was your best moment in your Merton FC career till now?

3. What was your best moment in your MFC career till now? Having my first Merton goal stolen from me on the line by Tom Benham. He finished club top goalscorer last year, I wonder how...

4. If you could play for a professional team, which would be it and why?

Portsmouth- boyhood team

5. Do you have any pre-match rituals or superstitions?

None as good as Mustard's.

6. Lastly, share us your goals/expectations for the season.

I'm part of the 2s/3s supersquad which has enough quality in it to challenge for the league(s). Would probably count 2s out of the cup for now though.

Player of the season (so far): Marcus Rashford

Childhood Team: Portsmouth

Favourite team in the UK: Portsmouth

Favourite team outside the UK: Bambini FC

Childhood Hero: Steven Gerrard

Favourite Food: Roast

Favourite Drink: Badger's Fursty Ferret

Favourite Band: Red Hot Chilli Peppers

RAPID FIRE

U13s

MERTON FC 2 OLD COULSDON COLTS BLAZERS 2

This was a league match at home. It was a hard match. They had quite a few players who were very good. We did not play that great in the first half as we did not communicate with each other. We all played a lot better in the second half, we pressured and got more stuck-in but we did not get tight enough to their players. The score was 2-2. The goalscorers were Keiron and Daniel.

Keiron scored an open goal going past the keeper. Daniel scored a goal by a freekick cross by Theo then which lead to a half volley in the six yard box. One of their goals was from a freekick that should of been a foul given to us because they were blocking the keepers sight. Their second goal was from a goal-kick which went through the midfield and then past the defence then it was a one-on-one with the keeper which was slotted away.

MAN OF THE MATCH: Theo (CAM)

MATCH REPORT BY: Milo (Goalkeeper)



Merton U13s: Milo in action

U15s

MERTON FC 1 KINGSTONIANS 2

Excellent performance that ultimately ended in a defeat for a hardworking and battling side today. The team had to regroup and start again following the result last week and message of the day was to get the enjoyment back in the team, and have fun playing football.

We made a solid start despite kingstonians having a lot of the ball. Holding strong under immense pressure at times, whilst kingstonians knocked the ball around at comeortable ease.

We nicked a goal and took a 1-0 lead, albeit against the run of play, but something that we had worked hard for. Bradley applying the finishing touch after the ball bobbed around in the area. Following the goal we continued to battle and could have had 2 or 3 more goals had we taken our chances.

A free kick was given 5 yards in our half, not much danger for us; or so it seemed! There skipper pulling out a cracking free kick that flew past Estaban in goal. It was now 1-1 and it was game on, an even contest that both teams battled for the upper hand in.

The second half and we continued to play well, battling and showing our quality when we had the ball. Challenge from last weekend was to create more chances than we did last time, and we did. Continuing to create chances, and getting closer to their goal.

Midway through the second half, Jake running in on goal, the K's goalkeeper came rushing out and handled outside his area. Ks were rattled and Merton carried on pushing for the second goal.

We began to run out of ideas and K's began to increase the pressure on our goal. We continued to battle and hold out until 79th minute. When we lost our player in the box and he fired in the winner. Undeserved winner – couldn't be prouder of our players for their attitude and battling spirit.

Massive well done to all players, great attitude and spirit. Especially when opposition challenged the respect campaign to its boundaries!! Keeping our heads and continuing to do what we do best.

WHO'S WHERE AND WHEN

SATURDAY 29 OCTOBER 2016

1s
MERTON FC v HSBC
Joseph Hood Recreation Ground – 14:00

2s
WEIRSIDE RANGERS v MERTON FC
Imber Court Sports Club – 15:00

3s
MERTON FC v ALEXANDRA PARK
Joseph Hood Recreation Ground – 15:00

4s
MERTON FC v CIVIL SERVICE
Joseph Hood Recreation Ground – 15:00

5s
POLYTECHNIC v MERTON FC
Uni of Westminster Sports Ground – 15:00

6s
MERTON FC v SOUTH BANK CUACO
Joseph Hood Recreation Ground – 13:00

7s
MERTON FC v TBC
Joseph Hood Recreation Ground – TBC

SUNDAY 30 OCTOBER 2016

U9s
MERTON FC
No Fixture

U11s
No Fixture

U13s
**MERTON FC v WORPLESDON RANGERS
WARRIORS**
Joseph Hood Recreation Ground – 11:30

U14s
MERTON FC v BEDFONT EAGLES
Joseph Hood Recreation Ground – 11:30

U15s
MERTON FC v WHITTON WANDERERS YOUTH
Joseph Hood Recreation Ground – 11:30

MERTON FOOTBALL CLUB

Joseph Hood Pavilion, Joseph Hood Recreation Ground, Martin Way, Merton, London SW20 9BU