

THE MERTON WAY

"THE MIGHTY BOARS"

"100's of individuals, 7 teams, 1 club."





ABOUT US

We are an amateur sports team that currently has 7 adult football teams and 5 youth teams (U9, U11, U13, U14 and U15s).

Founded in 1910, we have affiliations with the Southern Amateur League and the Amateur Football Association.

Our home ground is Joseph Hood Recreation Ground, Martin Way, Merton, SW20 9BU.

As we are still a budding young football club we **welcome any new players at all levels to join our club.** So please put the word out to friends, family, work colleagues, people you meet at the park, at the bus stop, in the school playground or in the fruit & veg aisle of your supermarket!

We invite you to come down to our training sessions, or on a Sunday morning to see our youth teams in action.

TRAINING

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

TIME: 8pm-9.30pm on Wednesday evenings (please arrive by 7.45pm to stretch and warm up)

SURFACE: Astro-turf - please wear appropriate footwear

Each player 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 East fields 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.

Alternatively
Check out our website at:

<http://www.mertonfc.co.uk/>

Where you can send enquiries and find more information about our club.



2016-2017 Chairman's Overview

Membership

The season got off to a good start. With our new Secretary understanding social media we implemented a very effective recruitment campaign. This was supplemented by a determined effort to engage and involve the potential new members at training. This resulted in a good number of new members and with our special offer for reduced membership for Under 21s we recruited a lot of younger members.

This enabled us to field an extra team so we had seven adult teams. This is very much against the current trend where clubs are reducing the number of 11 a-side teams they have. Martin Quinlan and Dan Ali did a great job of creating a team from this and finishing the season half way up the division.

In October however there was some very sad news with the untimely death of Nick Papanastasiou in a traffic accident in Vietnam. Although a relatively

recent member of the club with his warm smile and enthusiasm he had become a very popular young man. We shared family and friends grief for a young man who made such an impact at this club. The family's funeral collection has been donated to the club and we are planning to use it to improve the appearance of our entrance with landscaping and provide much needed storage. We are currently in discussion with Council about this. Also we had a memorial game here on New Years day when a club side played a team of his friends and family. This is likely to be repeated next year.

We will be looking at the fees and offers for membership for consideration at the next AGM. However the Youth section has operated at a loss and we will need to increase the fees but they will still be competitive with the clubs in the area.

On the pitch

Overall it was an OK year! The 1s, 5s and 6s all promised better things but faded towards the end. But all teams did well enough to hold out optimism for next season. (Each Manager/captain has done a detailed review of their season) Our disciplinary record was acceptable with room for improvement. Too many silly bookings for dissent etc and a couple of red mists.

I am grateful to all the managers and captains who have helped out this season and particularly to Simon (Clappers) who keeps it all together across all the teams.

Our Youth section goes from strength to strength and we hope that next season we will have perhaps seven teams. That is due of course to the labours and resilience of Steve Dewsbury to whom we are eternally grateful. We also need to thank his increasing number of helpers who are becoming more involved and influential in the club. Thanks to Daniel /Darren /Steve/Gary and McKenzie and a special thanks to Dave Laughton who has helped

both adult club with refereeing and is retiring from his role in charge of discipline. He also does the youth section finances and running an U11s team.

All our youth teams did well. The U9s had a great season. As did the U14s who finished runners up in their league but sadly most of the team and managers are moving on to Doverhouse. We wish them well. All our teams did well and can look forward to next season.

This season the weather was not too unkind and we did not have quite so many postponements but enough to make us ever more aware of the limitations of The Hood and with Morden Park Project at best stagnating we have pulled together a small group to examine our options for improving our facilities here or elsewhere (Will Lowe /Ryan Gresty and Jo Squires) and to take this forward. We will keep the club informed.

We have continued training at St. Marks which has been well attended by the 1s and 5s. And both teams have benefitted.

Communications

We continued with our almost weekly magazine 'The Merton Way' This magazine has developed a wide readership across the SAL. Ram had to give up the editorship but Sam Singer-Ripley stepped up to the plate and has done a great job.

But of course to do a good editing job you need someone to write a report. We all like reading the match reports but we need to get a more

consistent series of reporters. Still we had some great contributions from Dave Quinton and Dave Goulding but we gave a small prize to Dan Kelly for his great work. Next year there will be a special award for the best reporting.

Our Communication effort is supported by an excellent website and thanks to Matt Haswell for that and a lively Facebook page with many contributors.



Bar and Catering

The Bar and Catering

The bar and our catering is a vital part of the Merton DNA. It is the best bar in the SAL. A good old fashioned club bar.

For some of our functions we have had Fish and Chips from Whistle Stop in Raynes Park or Pizzas. The odd BBQ goes down very well and thanks to Darren Avey for that but week in week out on a Saturday Jasper Kemp sorts out the food. Great pasta and Chilli as good as anything we get away from the Hood and a lot better than most.

The Bar is another great asset and over the past

many years has been expertly managed by Peter Kemp who at long last is stepping down. He will be sadly missed on the one side of the bar but I hope he still comes down and props up the bar from the other side and enjoys a good drink on a Saturday evening and perhaps runs the vets side on a Sunday. Peter is to become an honorary vice president for his excellent service and will continue on the club committee.

Peter leaves a real gap here and we will need volunteers to step forward and help run the bar on match days and for events. This is a major effort.

Committee

I have already thanked the managers and captains for their contribution but also need to mention the Committee. Some new very welcome very active faces this year and some old stalwarts. Toddy and Clappers have both done terrific jobs in the management of the club overall on and off the field. Thanks to Len Freeman as ever for his dedication to the finances and pulling our accounts together. The Dodge our president continues his support for the club and rallies the troops.

It is very encouraging that new people are stepping forward to help run the club but in addition to Peter Kemp Mark Chappell is standing down from the committee. He has been a strong cttee member for a very many years and has also been our fixtures secretary not an easy job with all the postponements and has an excellent reputation in the SAL. Mark will be helping us out in the interim until his replacement is bedded in and he will become an Honorary Vice President.

Looking ahead

The club faces a number of crucial issues.

- We must continue with our drive to recruit new members but also integrate the youth section into the club. We have encouraging signs with our U16s joining in some footy events.
- The SAL has some important decisions to make on constitution and allowing teams to not field teams. We will watch this carefully.
- Further Regionalisation is being debated by the SAL.
- Council resources now that IdVerde are being contracted for all maintenance
- Security in the face of vandalism
- Bar management
- Youth section development

Finally thanks to everyone who has helped make this a successful season.
Long may it continue.

Max Herbert
MERTON FC CLUB CHARIMAN



MERTON FC – 2017 EVENTS

This season we had great club functions.

- The Annual Merton Quiz was a great night thanks to our quizmaster for the night -Sherbs and some great Fish and Chips.
- We had a good club Christmas drinks night in the bar.
- Continuing our celebration of religious festivals an excellent
- Long Good Friday with a match against Old West Citz vets and the legend that is Jim Perrin.
- The Superbowl was celebrated to good effect

The season was rounded off with two cracking events:-

- the Inaugral Merton World Cup organised by Toddy
- Awards night on Cup final day. A great number of people helped to make that a success and it was terrific to have two so deserving winners of our two main awards.



Michael Todd (Pictured right), our new secretary won the Club Person of the year. Since he joined the club he and Natalie have made a wonderful positive impact bringing enormous energy and enthusiasm.

Chris Outred (Pictured left) was the Club Player of the Year. A great club stalwart who will give his all for any Merton team that needs him. A real Merton Man.

DATES FOR THE DIARY

- Adult training will start at the Hood on **Wednesday July 12th**
- The Club AGM is on **Wednesday July 19th** (after training)
- Pre-season friendlies will start **Saturday August 12th**



MERTON GOLF DAY

WHERE: THE OAKS CARSHALTON

WHEN: FRIDAY 28TH JULY - MIDDAY START



£30 ENTRY (INCLUDES £10 TOWARDS PRIZES)

PRIZES FOR 1ST, 2ND , 3RD + NEAREST THE PIN & LONGEST DRIVE!

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO PLAY AND HAVE NOT ALREADY DONE SO - PLEASE EMAIL MICHAELTODT61@GMAIL.COM TO CONFIRM YOUR PLACE.



AWARDS NIGHT

With the conclusion of yet another fine season at Merton FC, everyone's favourite occasion of the year rolled into town: awards night. The brains trust made the brave decision to host it on the same night as the FA Cup final, given the success of doing so the year before. Their reward was two London teams making it to the final, which unfortunately meant the loss of a few good men to Wembley on the night. But it hardly put a dampener on things, as scores and scores began to filter into the bar in the early evening. The final was a terrific affair, although the first goalscorer (and minute) were wrapped up disappointingly quickly – Matt Haswell the beneficiary after some dispute over the timing of the goal. In typical fashion, Arsenal were flagrant and nearly cost themselves what should have been a straightforward win over a lacklustre Chelsea. But, to the delight of a smattering of Gooners in our ranks, they just about fell over the line.

With that, it was onto the awards, and the hum of expectation as Max took the mic. There were some lovely acknowledgements made to all those who put so much into the club, not least Pete Kemp and Mark Chappell, who are leaving their respective roles and have been worthily inducted as Vice Presidents. We also remembered Nick Papanastasiou, who sadly passed away at the end of last year.

But onto the awards it was then, with Clappers taking centre stage. The full list of winners can be seen below, but it was great to see such a blend of new and old players among those being recognised. Some really popular winners among them too, with the likes of Siraj Durrani winning both the Golden Gloves award and the 1s Player of the Year. Paul Pearce was the emphatic winner of the 2s award, while there were big cheers reserved for young George Brobbey, who claimed the Golden Boot in his first season at Merton.

But the most deserving on the night was surely Chris Outred, who won the Club Player of the Year award. A Merton man through and through, who has always been willing to travel far and wide to play for any team donning the mighty Yellow. Incidentally, he and brother Dan also became the first brothers to win the award.

Wonderful scenes. But with the awards all done and dusted, it was back to the bar. Despite a snafu with the beer tap, the lads weren't to be denied, and their thirsts were never going to go unquenched. The last few drops were literally drank dry over a sensational game of categories – the highlight of which was Joe Grew repeating the same answer in the category of his own choice.

Massive, massive thanks to Matt Haswell for putting up with it all, and gamely staying to the bitter end to serve us all. For a brave few, the evening was then ended in the general Earlsfield area. As closing time approached, there could not have been a more appropriate conclusion to the season than Vanny getting (double) golf balled. What a way to end 2016/17. Looking forward to what 2017/18 has in store already.

AWARDS LIST

1s Top scorer: Charlie Hockless

1s Player of the year: Siraj Durrani

2s Top scorer: David Quainton/Dan Kelly

2s Player of the year: Paul Pearce

3s Top scorer: Glenn Pitman

3s Player of the year: Dan Bridgeman

4s Top scorer: Dom Plumridge

4s Player of the year: Dom Plumridge

5s Top scorer: Dulanie Richards

5s Player of the year: Delman Babaker

6s Top scorer: George Brobbey

6s Player of the year: Callum Fisher

7s Top scorer: Malcolm Kandulu

7s Player of the year: Tom Roberts

Golden Gloves: Siraj Durrani

Golden Boot: George Brobbey

Match Report Writer of the Year: Dan Kelly

Club Player of the Year: **Chris Outred**

Club Person of the Year: **Mike Todt**



1s

It was a perfectly satisfactory outcome for the season with lots of positives to take into next season but, because it promised so much more, a mid table finish and a cup semi final defeat was a poor return for some excellent football.

So to deal with the results first, the firsts had a good run of league and cup results up until Christmas with wins against The Bank of England twice and scoring a good few goals against sides lower in the division. So with second place and still in cups all seemed set fair. But after Christmas goals were harder to come by and we had a little less fortune in both penalty areas. A string of narrow defeats and a heavy defeat at the Bank put paid to any hopes of promotion. The season's last hope of a SAL Senior Cup Final ended with a semi final defeat at Crouch End Vampires.

The season had started with some new faces bringing fresh younger legs into the side. There were very welcome additions of Sam Harvey, Jonny Graham, Nick Van Windscreen, Chaz and Milo. James Laughton and Elz also made some good contributions. Our defence performed really well all season. Siri in goal put in some terrific performances and was deservedly the team's 'Player of the Season' and the Club's Golden Gloves winner. He is a very good shot stopper and brave particularly outstanding when we were defending a narrow lead against the BOE. In front of him our central defensive team of Clappers and Browner did really well. Clappers and Browner have been an outstanding duo for the 1s for the last ten seasons. Clappers rightly paid tribute to Browner at the awards night for his contribution through the years. Full backs were Rat and Kearnsy, chalk and cheese. Rat experienced, steady and reliable and Kearnsy young and unpredictable but with a great touch going forward and opportunistic. Chaz played in defence in any of these positions, great in the air and a strong tackler, and if he'd played more would've pushed Siri for player of the season.

In midfield the new was supplemented by the old with some of our older stalwarts getting a new lease of life. Woody had one of his best seasons scoring direct from free kicks but if too far out deadly delivery from set pieces. Tills was his usual strong inspirational self. Wilgo made a nice return to the 1s squad and put in some solid performances. Will Low quietly dominated opponents again but injury was unkind to him. Sam Harvey thrived on playing alongside these experienced guys and looks very capable of being the long term replacement for Tills, maybe even Clappers as captain. Up front Charlie Hockless was the stand out performer and leading goalscorer. He really has come on a lot this season and holds the ball up well with a good touch and strength. He was well supported by Vanny, Matt Boshier, Johnny Graham and Tom Rowe who all chipped in with some timely goals and good performances. James, Elz and Milo mixed in well across the front gradually finding their feet in senior football. Injuries meant we rarely played the same three from week to week and that probably affected our consistency.

All of this was bound together by Clappers who managed the team on and off the field with enthusiasm and skill. He did a fantastic job and was well supported by Vanny. Even with some new members the team bedded down very well with good team spirit and camaraderie. The disciplinary record was acceptable although three red cards was too many.

We will however start next season without James Tilley who is moving to the West Country. He has been with us for nearly ten years wearing the No 6 shirt and dominating in midfield. His on field presence driving the boys forward, a captain leading by example will leave a hole that the team will need to work together to fill.

So what are the hopes for next season. The younger players and new recruits give a positive feel for next season and I am optimistic that we can push for promotion. I like the way this team plays and behaves I was immensely proud of them representing Merton on and off the field.



2s

So, here it is. The Merton 2nd XI season review. Take a deep breath. Cramming 9 months of action into one summary isn't easy, you know. And here we go.

WLLLLLWDDWLWDWLLWWL.

What a season.

Oh, you want more than the beautifully succinct and oh so objective summary above? Fine.

The season kicked off in style with a fine 4-2 win over Oldsmiths, with Wilgo in particular putting in a fine performance of power and finishing. If he plays like that every week...oh.

After that, it's fair to say things went a bit weak and wobbly, to borrow a phrase from the current parlance. A cruel defeat in pens at Old Owens knocked us out of one cup, and an equally cruel 3-2 reverse AET from a clear handball knocked us out of a second a fortnight later. A third cup defeat to an excellent NUFC oilers side completed a hatrick of first round exits. In and around these cup games a 2-1 reverse at St James and a 1-0 defeat at Weirside made it 5 defeats on the spin.

Lesser teams might have written the season off, but under Lofty's guidance this 2s team bounced back in style with a 4-1 win at the Hood vs Old Blues. A battling 0-0 with then-leaders HSBC followed, then a slightly disappointing draw with then-(and still) bottom Kew. Revenge was quick in coming as Merton savaged the visitors in the return fixture the following week, with a thumping 9-2 win.

Going into December, and with teams taking points off each other, promotion remained a possibility. The damage of a 3-2 reverse at HSBC was partly amended by picking up 7 points from next available 9, keeping the dream alive. The the impact of those cup defeats hit. Heading into February, just 5 games remained and with regular gaps in fixtures the momentum and the consistency of squad availability was lost.

Our proud unbeaten home record was comprehensively shattered with a 4-0 defeat vs St James in which Sherbs was MOTM. A 1-0 defeat vs South Bank followed and dreams of promotion died with those defeats. Two wins from the last three games saw Merton finish 5th in the midst of mid table positions. But a story of the season isn't just about the results. The memories along the way are sometimes just, or even more important, and this season proved this more than most. So here's the real story(ies) of the season, in the most subjective of terms.

-Jason and Ryan taking a romantic walk that turned into an abortive attempt to move pitches at St James. The home team then cheerfully telling us after the game it was their first ever win in the SAL, whilst providing the best buffet lunch the SAL will ever see.

-Rayner striding on to ball to equalise vs South Bank in the cup following a brilliant team move, and then repeating the trick in injury time to take the tie to extra time. For a moment I'm sure he was running as fast as a train. Or a dog as fast as a train.

-The joy of ending our run of defeats at Old Blues (lofty rolling back the years with a sumptuous volley) turned bittersweet on finding we had been robbed afterwards.

-An injured Ben Victory ignoring the pain to storm up the pitch on the counter at Kew to bundle home what we all thought was a last minute winner.

-DK and Wilgo bantering before the game. "Looking forward to your monthly game, Wilgo?" "Well, what's your goals to game record?" DK subsequently scoring 2 in the first 5 mins with Wilgo the first to congratulate him as both (and the team) excelled in a 9-2 win where neither DK, DQ or BDS could quite grab a hatrick.

-To HSBC, where Cookie boiled over after being chopped for the third time in quick succession. Heads were butted, more importantly hair was pulled and Cookie went to Inferno to calm down.

-Conor Murphy and an oppo player being lectured by the referee. "See that playground. I'll send you both over there where you belong if you don't stop behaving like children." Conor secretly loving it all, winding up the oppo whilst barely putting a foot wrong as he did all season.

-Back to Kew to play Old Blues. A bare 11, but Cookie magnificent in midfield and Manny excelling at wingback in an unfamiliar role. The sweetest of victories.

-Sherbs moment of madness at South Bank, his dander up, slapping the oppo striker. And somehow only a getting a yellow! And more positively, the oppo centre backs clapping him after yet another unbelievable save vs St James.

-DQ. Wordsmith and man of many brunches, he simply got better and better after returning from injury, finishing joint top scorer. Particular highlights include the chuckle brothers-esque "to me, to you" routine with DK, which they loved and the rest of the team (especially AHR) despaired of. And that volley on the last day. Top scorer and goal of the season beckoned, only to be denied by the post.

-Much as the Merton old timers played their part, for the first time in a while, new blood also played it's part. Joe Grew stealing DQs goal at HSBC. AHR always never not running. Jordan slotting into the 2s defence like he had played there all his life. Manny scaring the life out of defences, and somehow scoring from the byline with his incredible golf banana shot. Alexes Welch, King and Goodwin all played their part too, and the future looks bright for the club.

-And then finally, last but the very best of us. Pearcey. Captain, heartbeat of the side and unanimous player of the season. Last ditch tackles, smooth interceptions, a nerveless penalty in the cup among the many highlights. Playing on injured on the last day of the season. Always keen to play up top! Always there to pick us up.

So there it is ladies and gentlemen, the story of the 2s this season. For those that were part of it, look back, remember and be proud. It was an absolute pleasure to be part of it.



WORLD CUP



After a build-up which included a live draw, vast over-catering for a barbecue, an almighty palaver setting up goals, and a frantic search around London for an air horn, the inaugural Merton 6-a-side World Cup finally dawned under some rather dull skies.

A mixture of excitement, curiosity and tardiness was in the air, as the players just about assembled on time for the mandatory briefing. There were precious few no shows on the day in fact, although the few that did all seemed to be from the unfortunate Team Italy, which led to a last-minute transfer for Mick Elgar to assist the Azzurri. Martin Quinlan too was a late substitute, filling in for Team Spain, who were rather lacking in (fit) goalkeepers.

Nevertheless, following an inspiring rules briefing from Clappers, and the sound of said elusive air horn (or Klaxon - a word I'd never heard of - as it became known for the rest of the day) sounded, and play began.

Team Brazil were the early movers and shakers in Group 1, with Chaz Martin pummelling four goals past an unfortunate England in a 6-2 win. On the other pitch in Group 2, Spain snuck home 4-3 against Cameroon, despite a Clappers thunderbolt.

The games came thick and fast thereafter, with the 6-strong squad of Team Italy beating France 4-2, and Germany and Argentina playing out a tense 1-1 draw next door. The next round saw the Germans topple the Spaniards 2-0, Cameroon pick up their first win over Argentina (4-1), Italy thrash England (5-1) and France pull off a 2-1 victory against Brazil, thanks to a last-minute, stonewall/controversial penalty.

Cameroon then booked their place in the semis, as they pipped Germany by the odd goal in their final group game. It wasn't without controversy though, with Anam cruelly being denied a would-be equaliser at the death. Dwayne was the unfortunate whistleblower, and copped his share of stick afterwards for the misjudgement.

Back in Group 1, Brazil simultaneously pulled off what seemed like a vital victory in a 5-4 thriller with Italy. Chaz banked another four-fer, including an audacious, breathtaking overhead bicycle kick. Chappell in goal also made an extraordinary save at the death. But their heroics proved to be in vain, as Team France, needing to win by five clear goals, marched into the playoffs with a resounding 8-2 win over England in the final group game.

The drama was far from over in Group 2 though, as Argentina looked well on course for the semi finals as they led 3-0 over Spain. But the (very belated) introduction of U/15 star Jamie Esteban turned the game on its head, as he smashed a hat trick to seal a remarkable 4-3 win for the men in red.

And so to the semi finals then, with Italy taking on Spain, and Cameroon squaring off against France. The latter was a somewhat comfortable affair for the Africans, as they romped home 4-1 - Ed Plaistow scoring a brace at long odds.

The other semi was a tenser affair, but Spain proved too good in the end, eventually trouncing a spirited Italian outfit 5-3.

And then there were two - Spain and Cameroon. The crowd watched on as a tense game of few chances appeared to be heading for a stalemate. Darren Fitz ignited things though, with a well-taken goal to put Spain on the cusp of glory.

But they missed clear chances to put the game beyond doubt, while Kieran made some barnstorming saves. It prompted Rat on the sideline to declare that the stage was set for Clappers to turn things around. Not one minute later, the 52-year old stepped up and thumped the equaliser into the corner from the halfway line. Cue wild celebrations, and concern for Neal Davison, who was now contemplating having to pay Chappell out for his bet on Cameroon.

It felt written in the stars by now though, and 0.5 seconds before the final whistle - er, Klaxon - sounded, Dom Plumridge stroked home the winner to crown Cameroon the world champions in dramatic fashion.

Full credit to their experienced combination for pulling off the win, and hats off to Spain for their brave effort too. Many thanks to all those who helped organise a very enjoyable day, with bigger thanks to Darren Avey and assistant Joe Squire for producing an endless conveyor belt of treats from the BBQ. Look forward to doing it all again next year, and knocking Cameroon off their perch!



Brazil play out from the back.



Team Cameroon - Merton WC 6-a-side Winners 2017



Michael Todd in Goal - Crowd watches on



3s

With the fourth best defensive record in the league, a great team spirit, putting in competitive performances in every game and finishing the league season with three wins out of four (including a 4-0 win over last season's league champions, Nottsborough), one could be forgiven for being surprised that the 3s finished bottom of their league. This though, is what happened and it pretty much came down to small margins, evidenced by nine defeats by a solitary goal.

Winding back to the start of the season where The Boars (adopted name for the 3s), had come off the back of a really positive previous season where they finished 3rd in the league and were expecting to mount a promotion / title challenge. To create a balanced number of teams in the leagues, the SAL determined shortly before the new season started, that The Boars would be promoted, despite finishing 18 points behind 2nd place. Additionally, six of the squad were deservedly promoted to the 2s, which meant that a number of new faces joined the squad. Such an amount of change and playing at a higher standard, naturally meant that there would be a period of finding our feet as the season started.

A North London trip to Alexandra Park, never an ideal intro to SAL football for the first game of the season but it does give a measure of what the SAL is about, so if you want to stick with things after that, you'll probably be good for the season. After a losing start, form was immediately found and the corner had been turned with a resounding 7-1 win against Norsemen. Unfortunately for us, it wasn't long before Norsemen withdrew from the league and the result had been expunged, so no hat trick for Donno. A cup win on penalties was sandwiched by a spread of 4 defeats, two by one goal. The first league win that actually stayed on the records was an impressive 3-2 away win in early November against Old Owens with Glenn Pittman scoring 2 great goals and a sh*t goal from Darcy (standard), plus some great goalkeeping from Dan B. If only Glenn could read a sat nav. It would be nearly 3 months though before another league win was registered. 8 defeats in a row followed, but it never really felt like we were a bad team as team spirit remained high, high numbers of the team were always in the bar after the game and we were competitive in all of the games we played in, taking the lead in a few of the games we went on to lose (including two 2-0 leads, which somehow we managed to turn into 3-2 defeats). Points of note during this run, a goose sh*t on Joe Grew at Civil Service, Gubby on a cameo outfield nicked a goal from Neal, Dan R scored from a shot near the halfway line, Iain got mad at a teammate (although that didn't differ from the whole season), Neal sorted out his horrendous disciplinary record, Fitz scored his first goal for The Boars, Dan B had a nap during a game, an opposition player referred to Vin as a JCB, Joe grew his beard some more, Mustard and Jack both got stuck in the mud, Denys finally scored and Walshy continued to be Walshy.

From the end of January, our results started to match our performances and we got our next win, again it was away, at Old Wilsonians. A resolute performance in the first half was built on with two second half goals, one from the returning Chris Pap (whom sadly had lost his brother and fellow Boar, Nick, to a tragic bike accident in Vietnam, earlier in the season) and a great free kick from Glenn. Could have been closer if Andy Lewis's attempted OG had come off. The relief was evident and the changing room was certainly bouncing, aided by the stereo sound created by the second speaker purchased to play, finally, the winners' song! Another win followed in the next game, DQ tried his best to prevent the win by missing chance after chance and at the same time suffered the ignominy of but getting DOTD for his finishing, despite having scored a brace, including the last minute winner. Special mentions to 1) Jordan 'Jon' Cox for scoring a wonder goal, great goal lad! and 2) Denys for somehow failing to score whilst also not get penalised for having two attempts at punching the ball into the net, whilst lying down - not sure how he managed this but Denys is certainly a special lad. Next game, 2-0 up, 8 minutes to go, 3-2 loss. Not good.



The final match of the league season, a 4-0 win against Nottsborough and our first home league win too. Going up 1-0 in the space of the minute got the ball rolling, aided by Mustard's defence splitting 40 yard through ball to put Glenn through who set up Denys to score from close range. Sh*t goal from Darcy followed. Then a little treat from Ricardo 'Despacito' Iglesias who lobbed the keeper from 30 yards, as he'd just treated us to his pre match guilty pleasure of Despacito (months before Justin Bieber got his hands on it), the celebration consisted of The Boars making lots of noises that they considered to be South American, such as Ariba, Ariba! All good fun, Ricky seemed to enjoy it. Donno notched too, Ross didn't want to score so missed the seven chances he was given. Tony graced us with a rare appearance and even more fouls. Great win and against a team that Mustard stated he'd never previously been involved in a victory against, in 16 seasons at Merton. The duck has finally been broken. Great way to end a season, 3 wins out of 4 and optimism was high that The Boars could do well in The Spring Cup. Footnote - the Spring Cup was created as the league season had finished in February due to the league consisting of only 8 teams.

Sadly, the momentum was completely lost as the start date for the Spring Cup was put back twice and when it finally got going, only one team decided to turn up to the first match. This resulted in Merton unofficially winning 1-0 with a great team move and Dan B breaking from goal to lash in a great finish. Unfortunately this didn't count from an official perspective and we were deemed to have won the non game against Carshalton 0-0. By the time we finally got to play a game, it had been a full 6 weeks since we last played and it showed, we lost, say no more. With our chances of winning the Spring Cup over at this point, for the final game against Wandsworth Borough, we returned to our standard form for the season and lost by one goal.

It sounds quite perverse to say that a season where we relegated could be enjoyable but in a weird way it was, as the team consisted of a great bunch of lads, every match was a decent battle, we lost more than we won but it was generally close either way and we had fun. Big shout out to Dan Bridgeman, whom had a great first season at Merton as our goalkeeper and won the players' player of the year and to Glenn Pittman whom top scored for the team, again in his first season and was runner up as player of the year. Lots of reasons to be optimistic for next season where we expect to be in an a different division, the main thing we need to collectively improve even further upon is availability, as the more of us that are available for all / most games, the better chance we have of being successful and then we'll enjoy it even more. We're not the worst offenders but not the best either, will leave you with a question to ponder - are Saturdays there to play football or do you only play football when you have nothing else planned on a Saturday?

Great to add so many new faces to the existing Boars and the Boar spirit remained throughout. Thanks to all the players who turned out for The Boars this season, it's been memorable. Over and out.



4s

Well, what can you say about a season that ended in a second-successive relegation? On the face of it, you'd think there can't be too many positives, but that's not exactly true.

There was no shame in getting relegated from a strong league in 2015/16, and, tougher for the experience, the 4s came into this campaign expecting to challenge at the right end of the table. Armed with some promising new players, and some dapper new shirts courtesy of John Gridley and Dewalt, the mood was a confident one. But the first game really set the tone for the season. The scoreline read 4-1, a bad defeat to a side that Merton twice beat last season. But it was the negative atmosphere and infighting that day, which culminated in the departure of Sam the goalkeeper, that really was a dreadful low for this team.

It meant a new keeper in goal in the form of Kieran Lee, but despite good performances from him (throughout the season, in fact), the heavy defeats kept coming – thick and fast. Finally, some respite in a Cup game at Winchmore Hill, which briefly turned things around. A brave 3-2 defeat to a strong West Wickham outfit was then followed by a 5-0 thrashing of Civil Service. It felt like the corner had been turned.

The performance levels continued at decent heights, but a string of narrow, unfortunate defeats – including one to table-topping Carshalton – really hurt the cause. There was some respite courtesy of a 9-2 trouncing of Lloyds Warren in the lead up to Christmas, but it would be the 18th of February before Merton tasted victory again – this time, a good 2-0 win against Bank of England. The double was completed against Lloyds Warren a week later, but by that stage, the 4s were on the brink of relegation. A 5-1 defeat at the hands of Ibis sealed the Yellows' fate in the final game.

The Spring Cup then offered some sanctuary to salvage the season, but a combination of a lack of enthusiasm among some players, and some bad luck too, meant that three defeats accrued from it.

All in all, a poor season in terms of results. But the number of close games demonstrated that, for much of the time, the 4s actually weren't that far away. And, after the shameful scenes of the first week, the team spirit held together pretty well, given the unfortunate losses. Credit must go to the manager for that, who commands the respect of all his players.

There were also some real standout performers too. Will Harrison was a true team man, who lifted everybody by at least 10 per cent each time he played. Just a shame we couldn't have him play a few more games, but he really was the find of the season. Aaron Loftus and Mike Voight also showcased their abilities, which was good to see. Frankie settled in nicely from the 3s, and the commitment he showed could not be faulted. And Joe Plumridge, somewhat under the radar, actually had a very, very good season.

But of course, it was his brother Dom who rightly claimed the plaudits, scooping both the top goalscorer and player's player award. A massive congratulations to him.

A special mention too for Chris Outred, whose unstinting service to the club, and indeed the team, saw him win the Club Player of the Year award. The massive reception he received tells you all you need to know about the fella, and why he richly deserved the award.

All in all, a heck of a lot of positives, and plenty of good eggs in this team. Let's hope that it all adds up to better results next term, as this crop of lads commence their push for promotion in the 2017/18 season!



5s

After the disappointment of last season and the struggles that the 5s endured we looked to start the season afresh with a squad that had the opportunity to train together over the summer period. With the help of Andy Bitmead looking after the training element and providing tactical insight, Darren's persuasion for post match drinks and Jenner's enthusiasm to help the cause, an improved team atmosphere looked set for the upcoming season.

Preseason saw the team molded with faces old (sorry Steve B had to give you a big shout out with the term old being used) and new. We started the season with one goal in mind: promotion. The return of former 5s players and the introduction of newer Mertonians appeared to provide a good balance as we started strongly with winning starts and hard fought results to show. Leading up to Christmas with only one loss saw a string of vastly improved team performances compared to last year.

Christmas loomed and brought many a change, not just the turning of the year. As the 5s local MP relocated up north to pursue a career to be the next Jezza C, a few new faces came in. Tiago brought a confusingly un-Portuguese-drop-bear flair (by flair we mean flying in two footed and then rolling around with cramp) while another addition used to rolling on the floor, Bambi (Tom R) also joined the ranks.

The break after Christmas was long and showed in many of the immediate performances with lack of match practice, too much turkey and perhaps a foot of the gas saw the 5s slip down the table after a promising start. Our game of the season from an aspect of domination had to be against HSBC away as total football was played (who knew?!) and saw a good team game throughout.

However to stir controversy there are two games which stick in my mind and has made me proud of what the lads have achieved this season, despite falling short of promotion. Old Wilsonians away IBIS away saw hard fought battles and top effort put in from all of the lads. I'm confident that if we can put in the same effort in those games equally across all of our games next season we will see our promotion bid rewarded.

I hope to see many of you back at it at preseason and getting involved with pre-preseason and look forward to 2017/18!



MAX'S MAGICAL MOMENTS

- Getting an extra team out so we had seven teams in the SAL
- Sponsorship for two sets of kit from Excelian (1s) and De Walt (4s).
- The 1s winning 4-3 at Bank of England. Clappers heading the 4th goal from a Woody corner and to top it off Chas swinging on the cross-bar. That's the way! All on video.
- The World Cup 6 a-sides such a great event.
- The vets game against OWCs and Long Good Friday generally .
- Awards night and such a wonderful reception for the very popular Toddy and Chris Outred.
- Watching our Under 9s with Gary doing such a great job.
- Seeing the average age of our 1s and 2s plummet
- Paul Pearce getting 2s player of the year on a unanimous vote.



6s

It was ultimately a season that often promised much but left us frustrated of what might have been. For sure I think we can be critical that we should have gained promotion easily, but a mix of bad luck, SAL politics, injuries and Mike Todt's forehead cost us dear.

Funny however that I'm sure if you'd have told us we could finish 3rd when the season started we might well have had a little laugh, as whilst we had the basis of a very solid squad and team, I personally couldn't see us putting in a consistent challenge. This viewpoint changed very quickly over a couple of weeks. The creation of the 7s took pressure off Kevin and his management team to accommodate so many players that sometimes meant we didn't pick the best balanced squad in favour of being fair to regulars, and then George Hall brought a couple of players who proved to be not too shabby ..I can just imagine George saying something quiet like "can I bring my cousin and his mates, they play a bit". I wasn't there for their first game, but George, Callum and Trey proved to be the catalyst for the 6s charge. It wasn't only because they are all very good players - but it allowed us to utilise better our better players like Ty , Paul and Chris, and offered good competition for the rest to make it a really competitive squad.

Unfortunately, we came up short, largely because of silly results when we absolutely battered teams but somehow failed to score and silly games like Bank of England and Old Wilsons that we managed to lose rather than opponents win. We, without doubt, left a lot of points out on the pitch and it should give us great heart going into the next season when we will for sure be one of the teams to watch.

Highlights will always be the great display at Bank of England when we were at times unplayable. The utter demolition of Parmitarians, Standing toe to toe with Carshalton for 60 minutes before their higher quality made the difference... Oh .. and Matt's OG



7s

As a group thrust together in the aftermath of the start of the season, no preseason to speak of, it was the players desire and personality that kept the 7s together.

No one likes being the clubs so called bottom team, but in this group, you had a bunch of lads that revelled in being the under dogs, a group that enjoyed each other's company and who hit it off from day one, banter in the 'chat', always followed on in the changing room, win lose or draw, we always looked on the bright side... and forward to the next game.

A rundown of the player's season as follows, starting from the back and working forward -

Goalkeeper – 'Whore' ever can turn up and play in goal or was free, a position that is hoped will be filled more permanently next season. Thanks to the likes of Gubby, Kieron and Sam to name but a few who stepped between the sticks to help out, much thanks to these guys

Left Back –

Martin: Must be one of the oldest players at Merton, rumour has it he taught god as a young boy how to kick a ball. Even being in his twilight years as a player, not only one of the most reliable players, but also (for his age) one of the fittest, never stops running... !

Left/ Centre Back -

Tom J: Good on left, better at centre, trusted player who on occasions has run at the opposition from deep and has been known to venture over the half way line, which is soon followed by cries of 'PASSSSSS'... Can be heard telling the captain to push forward on most if not all occasions, good in the air against little people!

Centre Backs –

Dan 'The Manager': Made centre left his own (being the manger, not many could argue!) can use either foot... to run with. Loves a slide tackle or 'falling over in stages' as it has been called. Needs a haircut as it seems to affect his heading ability... Also, boast one of the best win records when played (I think!)

Tom R: Very quiet and polite chap... no wait. That's the other Tom! This Tom would slide tackle your granny and kick her on the way down... great, strong player who commands the position he plays in. Must hold the record for most 50/50 won in a game... not that anyone would argue with him!

Right Back –

Josh: Here we have Mr reliable, voted player of the season as most people found it easy to spell his name. Mostly remembered for running the whole length of the pitch v SBC and not passing to Adam! Great tackle (so I been told), very composed and worthy winner of player of the season (said through gritted teeth)

Wingers –

Noor: Mr Jekyll and 'Hide', at the start of the season, found it hard to break into the team, until he went under a transformation which saw Noor win back to back MOTMs, great feet (size 7 I think) and blessed with serious shooting boots... although he only scored 1.... Maybe 2!!

Billy: every team needs a sick note... always injured, or has a niggling pain... but when he turns up, boy does he run... for about 15minutes... then his injured... or throwing up.. or turning blue like a smurf!! It's a shame, as he has potential... to finish a game! We all expect better thing from him next year (at least 20 minutes of running)

Centre Mid –

Adam E: Loves playing in the middle, although manly found out on the right wing, gets involved with the play and links up well with Josh to form a mighty duo... all seems to go to pot when he gets over the half way line or remotely close to the goal... Shooting is clearly not his strong point, good job he has the ability to cross a ball on a 'sixpence'

David – Old, but not as old as Martin, has a beard. Shouts a lot

Andrew 'dobby': The versatile player of the squad, can play anywhere, left back, right back, left or right wing, centre mid... but sub seems to be the common choice...! always pops up with an important goal... has a left foot that can only be use for standing on!!



Forwards-

Malcolm: Although a forward, normally sits back to look after David... and yet, still managed to finish top scorer. His gut busting runs over 2 yards are legendary and this quickness contributed to most of his season goals. A true squad player who went the whole season needing an operation, but settled on trying to get his hip fixed instead!

Scott: Hot on the tail of Malcolm in the scoring charts, he has an eye for goal, although it may need a monocle at times! Played best in defence, but tried to convince everyone he was a striker... all round, had a good season and played his part in trying to get Swanny of the 6s to retire after a dubious goal.

Jonathan: The striker with the longest running 100% record.... of not scoring! But once he got off the mark with a super goal, he bluntly refuses to tap in from 3 yards for a 2nd Needs to a new car if anyone is willing to donate, but a true team player if ever there was one

A note from the captain –

Would like to thank all the guys for a very entertaining season, I thought my playing days had come to an end a good few years ago (some might say they had!) but I've personal enjoyed every game. A big thanks to all the stand in players and those that joined late in the season. Hopefully we can all looked forward to next season and to better our 5th position... a lengthy cup run of some sorts wouldn't go a miss either

Good luck and see you at preseason (as long as its note on a Wednesday as I play 5 aside... or Thursday as I have beard weaving lessons... or a Tuesday as its after Monday and I can't do Monday either... !!)



U9s

Under 9s have enjoyed a successful season in the Surrey youth league.

Being a new team for the club and league I classed this season as our learning year, our mission to enter the 2017/18 season at U10s a recognised top team.

We started in the grey west division, in old fashioned money that's at the bottom in div 9. Having trained hard for many months we was well prepared and ready for action yet an unknown force in SYL.

But not for long, We smashed met police in our first match 9-1 and went on to easily win our next 4 league games, played 5, won 5, goals for 49, against 5. These results gained the attention of our fixture secretary and we was promptly promoted by 4 divisions!

Our strong results continued gaining us 2 more promotions. By the end of January we ranked in the top 30 teams and took our place in Div 3.

Things got a lot tougher at this level, but after two straight loses we acclimatised to the standard and rattled off 2 fantastic wins away against academy trained teams, the match away to NPL youth was for me our best performance to date. The boys showed great maturity and fight with no fear, we bossed the game was in control for the most part and never looked like losing. Was also entertaining watching the eufa badged coach kicking water bottles high into the air with an effing this and that each time we scored followed by an immediate apology for his actions. I wondered if bottle kicking would invalidate the guarantee on my adidas copas?

The season ended with us established in div3 having not lost to any team outside the top 25. Well done team, mission so far accomplished. But with one final challenge to come.

Last match of the season a friendly with the no1 team at u9s Sutton United. Unbeaten all year and fresh from a comfortable win vs millwall u9 academy. By all accounts they came to the hood expecting a simple win and although they ultimately ground us down and won well enough, we did score and for large periods in the game gave them reason to worry, typically our boys showed no fear, battled superbly and played in the right spirit as we have all season earning us an instant request for a re match in pre season for which we will train to win.

So that's us done. We have come a long way in 1 season, started at the bottom and finished up as the highest ranked local team. The boys have all improved week on week, they have accepted and excelled in every challenge, trained hard and played fair receiving kind comments from oppo teams along the way. Everyone in the squad has captained the team on merit, based on best in training each week with a cool little ceremony whereby the invisible captains armband is handed over. Everyone has won a man of the match on merit chosen each week by the previous week winners parent. Everyone has scored a goal. Our improvements have been achieved by commitment and hard work in training from everyone in and involved with the team. And, we have had a lot of laughs along the way as well as great support from parents and club, Max has made many appearances on the touchline so to Steve and Mackenzie who also travelled with us to support us in our victory over Barnes Eagles.

Thanks to everyone, Its been fun.



U11s

NO REPORT SUBMITTED



U13s

NO REPORT SUBMITTED



U14s

NO REPORT SUBMITTED



U15s

Dan and Darren took over the u15s during the summer, following on from their first season. After a good pre-season, in which we were able to keep hold of the majority of the players and add new players to the squad we started the season of relatively positively. Inconsistency had been the theme of the season, and despite making a positive start to the season so big results against us changed the course of the season. It was a case of win a couple, then lose a couple but the boys kept on battling and showing determination. Game v Kingstonians at Joseph Hood seemed the turning point of the season with the boys finding confidence and true determination. To only lose to the eventual league winners by 2 goals over 2 games is a massive achievement! Christmas came about and we ended December strongly and unbeaten! Our positive results were as inconsistent as our games due to the weather. However, the boys performances were good and the results were a lot tighter than before Christmas. Throughout the season we struggled for a goalkeeper, and a huge thanks has to be said to Tommy, George and Esteban for stepping in when needed. Esteban sadly leaving us to return to Spain. Throughout the second part of the season we picked up some good results, however the main theme of the season was 'we played well and didn't deserve to lose!' Darren and I were extremely proud of the resilience and determination that the boys showed throughout a challenging season.



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PHOTO GALLERY





EDITORS CORNER

Dear Reader,

As another season ends its easy to look back and say “we should’ve done better” or “If I scored that goal we could’ve pushed for promotion”. Both individually and as a club I feel that we have massively overachieved. Not necessarily on the pitch, but in terms of passion for the club and the individuals that make up the club. I, for one, am proud to be a member of the club because when I go to the club bar, or to games I know I can count on my team to be there. The sense of community within the club has gotten a lot stronger this season and it’s something that will bring more players to the club.

In the recent rise of terrorism around the world, with the decay of our economy (this report being written the day after the election, where the hung parliament looks to ruin our economy, and other such sad news such as Nick’s passing, It is essential that in the face of adversity that this clubs community gets stronger to carry on defying expectations.

100’s of individuals, 7 teams, 1 club. Its amazing that it can bring us all together, from all different backgrounds.

But let’s also transfer that community onto the pitch, have some fun playing football, and have a strong start, middle and end to next season. This means, going to training regularly and getting involved, making new friends and building upon old friendships. I hope to see you all next season.

Best Wishes

Sam Singer-Ripley

MERTON FC Newsletter Editor.

