

The Merton Way



2018 – 2019 season

Issue 1

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The Merton Way



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Note from the Editor

I am pleased to announce that after a gruelling recruitment process [where I semi-committed and was thrust into the job in minutes before I had a chance to change my mind], I am now your new editor of Merton Way!

This seems the best place to send my thanks to my design team, who put as much time as I have put into writing this editorial into designing this newsletter and making it look splendid for you. I hope you will all agree with me that she has done a great job, although I can't help but think it might not have been how she envisaged spending our date night...

I would also like to thank Big Dave [Mike Todt] for his relentless pursuance of match reports to get this newsletter together. I have always personally really enjoyed having something to read on the way to the game and I hope I live up to the previous editor's incredibly high standards.

Those who have ever attempted to read my match reports have expressly asked for more brevity in the newsletter than I ever afford to the reports. So that is how I have started off this one, and I don't expect the listening to stop there.

I want to hear from you in regards to what you expect, want [and not want] and hope for in your weekly newsletter. What would make you read it on the way to the game? The standard-bearers such as match reports, fixtures, note from the Chairman [who I am reliably informed is on a scouting trip looking for new players in Portugal at the moment]. I also like the idea of having player profiles introducing some of our newer players, as well as involving the youth section and having a 'rising star – Merton's next best thing' section which will profile some of our younger players. We will also liaise earlier with our stats department [Darren] to bring you the latest info on top goalscorers, assistors, golden glove etc.

There are lots of things that we can do with this; however I will rely on you to let me know what you want to see from it. You can send me your thoughts of what we should be including, and feedback on the content, to FFC_luke@hotmail.co.uk. At the very least it lets me know that someone reads it!

This newsletter will be run with you, for you, by you. For now, I hope you enjoy this scaled back version for this week and if you send me your comments early enough, we can make something majestic in advance of next week. In the meantime, I wish you all good luck and I hope to be reporting on 6 Merton wins next week!

Luke



The Social Boar-terfly



QUIZ NIGHT – SATURDAY 13TH OCTOBER, Merton FC

Bring any brain cells you have left (or bring some clever friends) for a night of trivia and fish and chips.

Teams of 6 max. £10pp – includes the grub!



OAP GAME – SATURDAY 20TH OCTOBER, Merton FC

Respect your elders! And cheer our vets on against Old West Citz – it may be their last step before Walking Football/the home.



RACE NIGHT – SATURDAY 10TH NOVEMBER, Merton FC

Yee hah! it's like going to the races, but indoors, and (hopefully) cheaper! There's even Prosecco for the ladies! £10pp

XMAS JUMP OFF – SATURDAY 8TH DECEMBER

It's too soon!!!! I can't bring myself to write any more – it's only SEPTEMBER!!!! But keep the date free and find a jumper!





Last week's results

League	Merton 1s	0	V	1	HSBC
					Harrison (OG)
League	Weirside	4	V	0	Merton 2s
Cup	Merton 3s	0	V	3	Reigatians
	Merton 4s	-	V	-	No match this week
	Poly 7s	2	V	1	Merton 5s
					Obang-Edu
Cup	Merton 6s	H	V	W	N/A



This week's fixtures

League	Alexandra Park	V	Merton 1s
Cup	Merton 2s	V	HSBC Reserves
League	Merton 3s	V	Civil Service 4s
Cup	Old Sedcopians 3s	V	Merton 4s
League	Poly 6s	V	Merton 5s
League	Merton 6s	V	Old Wilsonians 8s



Merton 1s 0 – 1 HSBC

The 1's welcomed HSBC to The Hood on Saturday looking to bounce back after a miserable 2-1 defeat away at EBOG the weekend prior (spoiler, we didn't bounce back).

We arrived 90 minutes before kickoff to soil the pitch and do our best to avoid any broken ankles. A good job all around. The level of commitment translated in to the first half performance as we came out with high energy and dominated possession. We should have been ahead at the half having created numerous opportunities and HSBC having very little play in our half.

Confidence was high at half time as we rightly felt they were there for the taking, and the domination continued for the first 20 minutes with Van, Ackers and George all causing problems. Unfortunately we couldn't put the ball in the back of the net and were made to pay midway through the first half when HSBC won a free kick just to the left of our 18 yard box. The ball was whipped in and I volleyed it in the top corner. Not much more to say really. There was some controversy as one of their players was drinking water on the pitch as the cross came in. An unusual, illegal tactic, but one the ref failed to spot nonetheless.

We had two glorious opportunities before the end of the game. The first fell to beardy Sam when the keeper brilliantly saved his free header 8 yards out. The second fell to George right at the death which was again brilliantly saved at a tight angle. We travel to Ally Pally this weekend looking to get our first points of the season. Onwards.



Weirside 4 – 0 Merton 2s

Significant moments:

Weirside had a goal disallowed for offside in the first half, Merton responded by missing two good chances, at half time Merton switched to five in midfield which resulted in us having more of the ball. However, two rash challenges and two set pieces later Merton were 2-0 down. We continued to dominate possession but the final ball eluded us. After a reshuffle at the back, confusion between goalkeeper and centre backs result in Merton being 3 down. Fourth goal is a good finish by their striker.

MOM: Craig Bull

DOTD: Ciaran McGowan



Merton 3s 0 – 3 Reigatians

The 3rds second outing of the season was against Old Reigatians in the cup, after an opening day 3-1 reversal at Polytechnic our thoughts turned to the road to Wembley (or whatever the cup final equivalent is for us)

After a bit of crack filling and so classic noughties tracks the game kicked off.

In the early exchanges the boars got the ball down and produced a few neat interchanges but never quite found the cutting edge once in the final third and the first 20 passed with reasonably quietly. That all changed at about the mid point of the first half.

From our own goal kick the ball was given away and with players out of position it only took a couple of passes for Reigatians to fashion a decent opening and put the ball past Ryan Collier in the Merton goal.

Within 5 minutes it was 0-2, the ball was turned over half way inside the opposition half but with far too many men in advanced positions it was fairly straight forward for the opposition to again threaten the home goal. This led to a shot from the away side that was destined for the goalkeepers arm to be deflected agonisingly past the stranded Ryan C by Joe Vaughan. So at half time the boars trailed 0-2.

The second half kicked off and things pretty quickly went from bad to worse.

From an opposition corner Neal Davison inexplicably decided to produce his best Maradona impression, the eagle eyed ref awarding the spot kick much to the ire of Diego Davison who claimed to have been “pushed”. The penalty was promptly dispatched making the score 0-3.

At that point a little tactical tinkering from the gaffer and his cohort of technical advisors on the side line seemed to do the trick as the boars maintained some decent possession but again the lack of quality in the final third meant all our endeavours came to nought. The best opportunity falling to Joe Vaughan who finding himself in the middle of the box and with time to pick his spot proceeded to essentially pass the ball back to the keeper. With the game becoming more stretched Reigatians broke down field and were awarded a second spot kick when Iain Evans was harshly adjudged to have unlawfully stopped the attacker in the penalty area, after the game the challenge would be compared to a WWE wrestling move!

Again the penalty was converted and so ended the 3's involvement in the SFA cup for another year.

MoM - Vin

DoD - Iain See you all next time



Poly 7s 1 – 2 Merton 5s

If we all learn one thing about Chiswick each time we go there, we will probably know all there is to know about Chiswick by the end of the season. Fun fact this week; average house prices in Chiswick are £936,743. But with the amount we save on transport costs, it could be worth it...

Once again this week, punctuality was not our strong point. In fairness, traffic conditions were bad, however really it's SW London – traffic is always bad! In a desperate attempt to win Dick of the Day, Phil arrived in his flip flops as if he'd just got back off a plane from Magaluf, and endeavoured to head the ball at innocent bystanders and fall comically on his ass when attempting to reach the ball. Backheel Phil became Stackheel Phil for the day. His avoidance of the award was helped by the fact that most of the team was not there.

Maybe it was the lateness, maybe it was the long drive, but the least said about the first half the better from our perspective. We allowed them time and space on the ball, we did not press at the right times like the week before with players pressing by themselves, there was no urgency whatsoever when the ball went out of play and we were so uncomposed on the ball you'd have thought it was our first time playing football. Vent over. Despite these minor discrepancies, the half was quite even. Matt N had a searching drive from 25-30 yards out that whistled over the bar which was the culmination of a strong move on the left, showing we still had it in us. Although we did not defend too well for their goal, it was a fine finish into the top corner from 20-25 yards out with Bitmead in goal just not getting enough of a finger on it to divert it away.

Second half required improvement, which is what we started to see. We started playing the ball around purposefully, although the game got very stretched leaving a lot more space which is something tactically we will need to work on. But we were matching them – right up until they got their second goal. Bitmead in goal raced out and collected the ball very well. His momentum, however, saw him crash into the opposition player's back, and the ball spilled out of his hands. It tricked backwards tantalisingly into the goal for 2-0.

We really came to life for the last 30 mins following that goal. A fine individual effort from our bulldozer Matt in midfield saw him caress the ball over one player, then another, to leave him with a clear shot from 25 yards. He unleashed a piledriver which just whistled over the bar, but had the goalkeeper stranded. If he hits them like he did in these games he will surely get a few.

Another great effort saw Yaw make a good move and pick the ball up on our right hand side. He drove past the defender and launched an audacious effort from out wide from 30 yards, which only narrowly dipped over the bar. Within minutes of coming on, Yaw was establishing himself as a key driver going forward.



Poly 7s 1 – 2 Merton 5s (cont'd)



And with approx. 15 minutes left, we found our way back into the match. Good pressure saw us win the ball high and break quickly. The ball was majestically flicked over the top for Pete to run onto – I forget who flicked it but only remember him as a hunk of man. Pete turned his man, then turned him again to work himself into a little bit of space. He unleashed a rapturous drive that soared into the back of the net to make it 2-1. Game on. Cue a penalty appeal. I can't remember much about it; only that Sam was breaking into the box and appeared to get wiped out with the defender not getting anywhere near the ball. No pen given, and play went on. With not long left, we were piling on the pressure. A late kind-of chance saw a corner whipped in by Yaw. It lobbed the keeper and looked for all the world as if it was going in, however in unfortunately bounced off the post, took a couple of ricochets and bounced to their player who cleared. The game ended 2-1 which although in terms of chances was created was harsh, in reality we did not dictate the game and should have done more to hurt them. Man of the match was Scott B for another fine display in defence. DOTD [now renamed Dick of the Dwayne] was the man himself, for...well, not a lot really. Just because. This was not by any stretch a terrible performance, but I know we can hold ourselves to better standards.



Claygate Royal Hares 2 – Merton U10s

Brilliant sunshine greeted Merton as they stepped onto the pitch after a relatively short trip down the A3 to Esher to face Claygate Royals. The opening exchanges showed that the teams were evenly matched; gradually Merton started to dominate possession and more importantly turn that possession into clear-cut chances. After sixteen minutes, Faris went close with a shot that Claygate's keeper just about managed tip over the bar. From the resulting corner, Rio hit the bar and then Claygate scrambled the ball clear.

Even though Merton were creating the majority of chances Claygate looked good on the counterattack and capable of scoring. Against the run of play they did just that, after a long goal kick and a big bounce Claygate's striker was bearing down on Merton's goal and managed to strike the ball low into the bottom right corner. 1 nil to Claygate.

Coach Neal made changes and on came Louis, Maxwell and Percy.

With his first touch of the ball Maxwell started on a run that took him to the right side of the Claygate penalty area. He then let fly with a fierce shot into the bottom left hand corner of Claygate's goal. Claygate's keeper dived the right way but could do nothing to stop it. 1-all. Game on!

The game remained incredibly open, no buses were parked and no-one was shutting up shop. The referee, who was very good at letting the game flow, eventually blew the whistle for half time.

The second half started the way the first had finished with good levels of energy and enthusiasm from both sides. Merton were slightly edging it in terms of possession but still needed good defensive work from Harry, Joe, Ollie and Max to keep the scores level.

Merton's midfield trio of Dave, Percy and Louis were doing particularly well and ten minutes into the second half Percy crossed from the left wing towards Louis. In a desperate attempt to prevent Louis getting to the ball the Claygate defender put the ball into his own net. 1-2 Merton lead for the first time.

Claygate mounted more attacks in an attempt to get back into the game, Merton responded with their own attacks. As



Claygate Royal Hares 2 – Merton U10s cont

players tired, some of the composure of the earlier exchanges was lost. This was a fair battle that could have ended 10-all.

After 18 minutes, Maxwell managed to control a bouncing ball in the centre circle and set off toward the Claygate goal. Just outside the penalty area, he struck a powerful shot that went in to the centre of the goal just below the crossbar. 1-3 to Merton!

More waves of attacks from Claygate, more hearts in mouth moments for both sets of parents. With only minutes left to play, a long shot from Claygate is brilliantly saved by Max, only for Claygate to be first to the loose ball and slot home. 2-3 Merton still lead.

Unbelievably both sides continued to create chances right up to the final whistle. In truth, either side could have won it but Merton managed to hang on to their lead and their 100% record. Two games and two wins!

Well done boys! Let's keep it going for Match Day 3.
Author: Mike Pitt





Claygate Royal Hares 2 – Merton U10s pics

