

THE MERTON WAY



WE'RE BACK!!!

Welcome to all our members old and new to another season at Merton Football Club.

The season is already underway for both the adults and youth teams and we have a lot of new members, new managers, new committee members and, we hope lots of new ideas and the enthusiasm to implement them.

The first is to resurrect and relaunch 'The Merton Way' and to make a success of that we need match reports and articles and pictures to be submitted early in the week.

It was a slightly disappointing start on Saturday with a dismal wet drizzly day. It did not help with the 1s and 2s SAL games being postponed with the opposition being unable to fulfil the fixtures. The 2s had a good friendly with South Bank. The 3s are in a very tough division after promotion last

year and lost their first game to Alexandra Park and the 4s lost at home to Old Actonians. The 5s and 6s won their last pre-season friendlies. It was a good day down at the Hood and very good 'apres footy' in the bar.

The Youth section with its five teams did very well on Sunday with the U9s, U14s and U15s winning. The U11s drew and the U13s lost 3-1 but put up a really good performance. Our newest recruits are our U9s, Dave Laughton has taken over running the U11s with Steve (bottom left pic) pictured at the Hood and U9s training on Saturdays.

Our pre-season recruitment has gone well and many thanks to our new secretary Michael Todt (bottom right pic) and Darren Avey who have worked hard at this.

I wish you all good luck for another enjoyable season.



Dave & Steve: with the under 11s



Michael Todt: Merton's new secretary

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.

2s

MERTON FC 3 SOUTH BANK CUACO 3

Miserable day, but a very entertaining game. Both sides played some good passing football and South Bank did well to fight back from a 3-0 half time deficit.

It was very much a new look Merton Reserve side but just as 'handsome' as ever. Many new good looking faces but we have lost a good few this season. Will Taylor and Marc Wilson have gone to live Down Under, the Stevens twins have moved for their jobs, Femi, Eggy, Joe Griffin have gone too, but the new look team is under a familiar old face with Lofty managing the side and organising it well and it was good to see Wilgo, Cookie and Jase out on the pitch and Sherbs in goal.

There were some new and not so new faces, some good young talent with Els scoring our first goal and making another. Jonny looked dangerous up-front and Sam strong in midfield. The 2s have gone from Div 1 to Div 3 in 3 years and will be looking to bounce back when their season gets underway.



Merton 2s: on the front foot



Merton 2s: getting to know each other and teamtalk

3s

MERTON FC 1 ALEXANDRA PARK 5

Having prepared for a long journey to north London, specifically Alexandra park, the boars seem to be ready for the start of the season.

Long trails of messages in whatsapp midweek gave us a hint of a strong selection. As there were new players joining the team for this season, Neal Davidson started sharing the quick rules and traditions. Himself being unable to abide at the very first and simple one “don’t be late”, whilst the ones that managed to get on time watched Man City beat Man United at the bar...

Finally, the kit arrived with Neal 30 minutes before kick off.. Once the boars were ready and on the pitch, instructions were given, and a 4-4-1-1 formation would be the gameplan.

As the game started we looked confident on the ball for the first 5 minutes, before one of the centre midfielders (not Darcy) gave the ball away, allowing opposition strikers to take the goal advantage.

It seemed a nightmare to have conceded within the first few minutes of the game. However, we started to hit back at the opposition with long passes, even though Neal as a lone striker was not much of a threat to their defence. Somehow we got a free kick not far from the edge of the box. Ricardo took the set piece lifting the ball into the box for Joe Grew to score a great header; cancelling out the advantage.

As the game progressed Merton kept giving away the ball whilst the opposition kept stretching the small pitch. I even heard a fellow player saying the opposition made it look like Wembley Stadium with the number of passes they had. Nevertheless, their striker ran from side to side of the pitch dodging the Merton midfielders and defenders to score a second goal.

From then on the opposition kept the pressure on us making it almost impossible to create chances. The third goal came after a clear foul on Ricky which the referee seemed to have missed somehow but, I must admit that the finish of the goal deserved to be mentioned. After that it was so hard to come back on the game and if I remember correctly they had more chances which Dan, Vin and Joe managed to keep out, leaving us 3-1 at half time.

In the second half the formation was changed to 4-3-3 which gave a bit more improvement to the team but again they managed to score from an offside possittion thanks to the referee not calling it. Neal came off with a hamstring injury, Ricky missed a chance to get back in the game putting the ball over the goal after their goalkeeper saved a shot from Darcy. Walshy conceded a penalty bringing down their striker. Dan, who did great in goal managed to save the penalty among other great saves, which in turn gave him man of the match at the end of the game. Ricky kept playing injured from the foul in the first half as no substitution was available until he “almost” walked off the pitch in frustration after a rant from another boar for a clumsy pass.

After all this we managed to concede two more goals on the second half leaving the final score 5-1.

The boars got together at the end of the game and briefly analysed what went wrong but looking for positives to take from the first game to improve future performances.

Dick of the day went to Ricky for walking off (even though he never left the pitch I have to say) merely the sideline to get some water. In punishment for this, he got to write this report that hopefully some may find true accounts of the events lol. Its worth a mention that the youth debutant, Joshua, did very well and we hope he continues to improve and grow among the older boars.

We left Alexandra Park in a positive frame of mind and looking ahead to the future, as there are still many games to play for.

4s

MERTON FC 1 ACTONIANS ASSOCIATION 4

Saturday 10 September. The day the season began for the Merton 4s. And a lovely setting it appeared to be for the launch of the 2016/17 campaign. The Hood was abuzz with yellow, with four teams playing at home on the day – albeit that the other three games were friendlies.

As a result, many eyes were on the 4s, who were taking on Actonians Association – a side with whom they had got relegated at the end of last season. Confidence was abound though, given that Merton had done the double over these foes last time around, so under gloomy skies and with a slick surface, it seemed like the perfect platform to launch the new campaign.

The only notable absentee was the manager (how big a miss he would prove to be). Sam in goal, a solid back four of John, Will, Mike and Ryan, with Dan and Joe plugging central midfield. Doddsy and Chris were the two wingers, with Sonny and Dom the two frontmen in a bog standard 4-4-2

Yet Actonians were barely recognisable from last season; littered with youth, and as soon as the game kicked off, it was abundantly clear that they were the side more up for the occasion. Merton were penned in their own half, and the visitors were winning every first and second ball. Frustrations were simmering, Dom and Sonny were receiving the square root of zero in terms of service upfront, and Merton couldn't seem to find a way to gain a foothold in the match.

Yet for all of Actonians' superiority, the defence were at least able to contain things, and the opponents couldn't really lay claim to having any genuine chances. It's what made the opening goal all the more frustrating. The corner swung in, and their striker nodded in a free header from point blank. It resembled a training ground exercise, and was almost inexplicable for a team who never usually concede from corners.

Nevertheless, it was 1-0, and the grumblings continued. Danny pulled up with an injury and had to be replaced, and the remaining 10 minutes of the half followed much the same pattern. Merton doing nothing, Actonians with all the endeavour, and goalmouth activity minimal.

The sanctuary of half time arrived, and the talk was largely positive. The plan was to go 4-5-1 for the start of the second half, with Sonny sacrificed to make way for a midfield three of Doddsy, Joe and Carl, with Arnold and Chris the two wide men. And for the first 10 minutes of the second stanza, it worked a treat. Merton were contesting balls in the middle, stringing together some passes, and keeping Actonians at bay.

And then came the chance – a glorious one. Joe found Carl's feet, and he dinked a delightful ball over the defence. Arnold, who had timed his run to perfection, found himself one on one with the keeper. Unfortunately, his finish snuck past the left-hand upright, and the chance was gone.

What followed next set the tone for the rest of a bitter match. Actonians played a through ball, and their striker was almost certainly offside. Yet the defence made the classic mistake of not playing to the whistle. The finish was clinical; Sam with no chance, and 2-0 it was.

But then things turned ugly. The recriminations began, and they were somewhat unfairly targeted at Sam. Yes, he made some errors, and on a few occasions failed to come off his line when he might have done. But in a game in which almost everyone to a man put in a performance ranging from mediocre to poor, it seemed slightly ludicrous to pinpoint Sam's faults – not to mention the fact that he made an outstanding save to keep it at 2-0.

6 | MATCH REPORT

The third goal arrived amid the sea of negativity, with Actonians completing a deft manoeuvre down the right, and the little winger producing a superb finish to Sam's left.

Ironically though, it was Sam who turned provider for Merton's riposte. A high, handsome kick caused mayhem in the visitor's defence, and Dom couldn't believe his luck as he found himself one on one with the keeper. A man of his quality was never going to miss: 3-1 it was, and with 20 minutes to go, there was still hope.

But the negative atmosphere made that seem like a distant dream. The bickering continued; again, largely targeted at Sam, and the final quarter was actually thoroughly unenjoyable. The fourth goal came for Actonians towards the end. Another bit of irony in that one too, given that it came via an excellent chip that caught Sam off his line (just as he'd been ordered to be).

By the time the final whistle went, heads were well and truly down, tempers were flaring, and everyone couldn't wait to get off the park. An attempt at mending fences by the skipper in the changing room afterwards didn't go according to plan, and it remains to be seen whether the 4s have now lost the services of Sam for the season.

Whoever was right or wrong, it mattered not. This was a sorry affair, and a poor start to the season. It's difficult to believe such fractious scenes would have taken place in the presence of the manager, and his return next week can't come quickly enough. This is a team in need of some soul searching (and perhaps a goalkeeper), and will need to very quickly consign the day's events to history, and start again.

Saturday 17 September: The day the season began. Let's hope so.

Team: Sam Singer Ripley (GK), John Gridley, Mike Todt, Will Harrison, Ryan Burchell, Chris Outred, Joe Plumridge, Dan Gridley, Chris Dodd, Sonny Kennedy, Dom Plumridge

Subs: Arnold Collier, Carl Kewley

Goal: Dom Plumridge

Booked: Dan Gridley

Man of the Match: Ryan Burchell

MICHAEL TODT



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

I am content manager – a job definition I have yet to fully understand myself – for a financial services company. It’s even less interesting than it sounds, but it’s been enough to give me an open door into London life. I’m a pretty easy-going, sociable guy. Although less so when I’m on the Central Line at 8am, craning my neck and sweating profusely.

2. How did you end up at Merton FC?

Good old Gumtree. We moved from delightful Woolwich to SW London in April 2015, and I was keen to find a fun, sociable and competitive club to join. Very lucky to have stumbled across Merton FC, which was the first one I trialed. Needless to say, I’ve never bothered pursuing any others since, and I feel very at home here.

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

Scoring a goal on my debut at the Hood last November was pretty special. Also, coming back from 2-0 down at half time to beat Old Wilsonians was a great game to be a part of.

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

Sunderland! Been a fan since I was seven years old, and despite how mediocre I am as a player, I am confident I could still improve them based on their current form.

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

Nope. I just hope to high heaven each time that injury doesn’t await.

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

After a “frenetic” first game, I’d like to see our team come together. After getting relegated last year, I feel like we’re in with a great chance of competing at the upper end of the league, so that’s the main goal. Failing that, sinking some pints and having a good laugh with some friends afterwards will no doubt be thoroughly enjoyable.

Player of the season (so far): Dom Plumridge

Childhood Team: Sunderland

Favourite team in the UK: Sunderland (and Merton!)

Favourite team outside the UK: The Proteas cricket team

Childhood Hero: Nelson Mandela

Favourite Food: A medium rare steak

Favourite Drink: Castle Lager (South African beer)

Favourite Band: Coldplay

RAPID FIRE

U9s

MERTON FC 11 **CLAYGATE 1**

A frustrating first half for Merton FC in which they dominated but could not turn dominance into chances.

The closest they came were two one-on-ones that were well blocked by the keeper. Claygate could barely get the ball, let alone mount a serious attack.

Finally, Merton broke the deadlock with some well taken goals, something that their high pressing deserved. One of the main talking points was Merton's 3rd goal, which, had it not gone in, would have aroused a serious case for a Merton penalty. A Claygate defender appeared to block a Merton shot with their hand, but the ball then fell to a Merton forward who then scored the 3rd goal.

Merton finished off the game with three more goals to put the game beyond Claygate.

Merton struggled for goals in the first few minutes, much like the first half, but an own-goal set them off. Claygate finally managed to get on the scoresheet at the end, a good counter-attack ended with a powerful shot past the Merton keeper.

Merton added a few more, but the game had been realistically over for a long time. A one-sided affair in which the promising Merton side were not truly tested.

The Merton coach said after the game that their weakness was slow starts but he was pleased with the way their high pressing worked.

U13s

MERTON FC 1

EPSOM & EWELL COLTS WHITES 3

At last the season began away at Epsom & Ewell. We all met at Joseph Hood nice and early, but not without a few drama's, Marcus (striker) forgot his boots, Milo (keeper) forgot his gloves, but worst of all Justin (winger) forgot his whole kit!! Not a good start.

At 10am, the whistle blew and the match started. The oppo had kicked off, made two passes and we managed to get the ball and keep possession and started to move the ball around nicely and Evan played a lovely through ball which found Marcus, he had a shot on goal and the keeper made a spectacular save. It was obvious at this early stage their keeper was going to be tricky to beat. For the next 20 minutes we dominated the game, passing and moving and shooting at every opportunity, shots from Isaac, Justin, Evan, Mckenzie, Keiron, Hugo and Marcus all on target and all saved by the keeper, He was outstanding! 10 minutes before half-time and the oppo managed to get in our half for the first by running down the right wing and Daniel made a fantastic tackle which gave them a corner. A threatening corner swooped in and we didn't manage to clear it properly, which there midfielder took a touch and banfed it in thr top corner, a good goal, but against the run of play. Five minutes left and Marcus found space and took at shot, a good save by the keeper again but he failed to keep hold of it and Isaac just had to tap it in... 1-1 at half-time.

In the second half, we had kick off and kept the ball, the oppo had changed tactics and had everyone behind the ball which we found it harder to attack, part of their tactics was to play the long ball over the top football which our defence had trouble dealing with. A miss-placed backpass by the Merton defence put our keeper under pressure and their striker managed somehow to get the ball over the line and we found ourselves 2-1 down. Now the oppo parked the bus and we struggled to play our usual pass and moving game. Five minutes from the end the oppo once again put a ball over the top and despite heroic defending from Freddie, Jack, Kadeem and Theo they managed to score another scrappy goal to make it 3-1.

Good game, pleased with the teams performance.

Report by: Mckenzie Dewsbury (Skipper)

Big thanks to:

Freddie's dad for being pitch marshall.

Jack's dad for running the line.

Isaac's mum for photos:

www.samiart.co.uk www.facebook.com/samiartis



Merton U13s: team line-up prior to a undeserved loss

U15s

MERTON FC 9
HALIFORD COLTS 4

Great result for our first game of the season.
Good performance after a poor start to the game.
Confidence booster and credit to all the boys.
Well done and kick on!

RAM'S HEADS UP

I'VE RECENTLY GONE DEEP IN MY MIND AND THOUGHT OF SOME OBSCURE THINGS, HERE ARE A FEW THAT HAVE ROLLED AROUND IN MY HEAD:

1. Why is it that bees/wasps fly indoors and then spend the rest of the time to hang against the window to try and find their way out?
2. Isn't it weird that we have one hand that knows how to do everything and then one hand that just sits there like "I don't know how to hold a pencil"
3. Everything I like is either illegal, immoral, fattening, expensive or impossible.
4. How do you solve a redneck murder, when all the DNA match and there are no dental records?
5. Farts are just ghosts of what we ate.
6. Why does toilet paper companies need to advertise, whose not buying?
7. Sometimes the thoughts in my head get so bored, they go out for a stroll through my mouth... it rarely ends well.
8. Whoever said nothing was impossible never tried slamming a revolving door.

TV OF THE WEEK:

Narcos – Netflix

SONG OF THE WEEK:

Closer (feat. Halsey) – The Chainsmokers

WHO'S WHERE AND WHEN

SATURDAY 17 SEPTEMBER 2016

1s

ALEXANDRA PARK v MERTON FC

Racecourse Ground – 15:00

2s

MERTON FC v AFC OLDSMITHS

Joseph Hood Recreation Ground – 15:00

3s

MERTON FC v NORSEMAN

Joseph Hood Recreation Ground – 15:00

4s

CIVIL SERVICE v MERTON FC

Kings House Sports Ground – 15:00

5s

IBIS EAGLES v MERTON FC

Chiswick Cricket Club/GSK Sports Ground – 15:00

6s

MERTON FC v OLD WILSONIANS

Wimbledon Common Extensions – 14:00

MERTON FOOTBALL CLUB

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