

THE MERTON WAY



CLUB WITH BENEFITS

Last weekend was a cracking one for the modern Merton. We fielded seven teams, six in the SAL and a Vets, on Saturday and all had full squads of 14. The bar was full of new, young, old and really old members and ex members, well into Saturday night. Then on Sunday the Youth section was out in force.

This is a great effort by all involved, given more and more clubs are struggling to fill their full compliment of sides and especially as we were one of those clubs over the last couple of seasons. Max would've been disappointed to miss it, given the hard work he's put in to get us in this position, but I'm sure a few small Portuguese beers and copious bottles of wine helped ease this.

On the pitch we were 50% win and lose on Saturday with both the 1s and 3s coming through cup games on penalties and the 5s maintaining their good start and

keeping another clean sheet.

On Sunday the Youth section were unbeaten with four wins and a draw. There were some strong results and we were up 18-8 across the five games. I'm not sure football was as much of a winner in the Vets game, it was a miserly 1-0 defeat, but at least the XL shirts got an airing and all concerned consumed their body weight in booze.

With our burgeoning membership numbers the club is keen to give value for money and added benefits where we can. Every paid up member is entitled to a Merton FC polo shirt so please give your Manager your size and we'll get these ordered. In addition this weekend we sent Tiago and Vin off to Wembley to watch the England game, Tiago because we couldn't get him a game and Vin because he was injured, and we'll be looking to do more of this sort of thing where we can.

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.

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. If burglars ever broke into my house and searched for money. I'd just laugh and search with them!
2. Women are like phones. Because they like being touched, held and talked to... but if you push the wrong buttons you will be disconnected!
3. I figured out why I eat ice cream, cake and chocolates when I am stressed. 'Stressed' spelt backwards is 'desserts'
4. This week before the game, tell the ref 'everything happens for a reason'. So when you punch an opponent in the face, remind the ref as to what you said to him before the game.
5. When you have a text conversation with someone and you see them typing, do you find yourself typing faster so that you don't have to change your message?
6. Some people are like clouds. When they disappear, its a beautiful day!
7. I got stopped by the police the other day and he asked me 'if I was drinking?' I replied back 'You buying?' Now I need bail money!!
8. What do people do with that extra time when they write 'K' instead of 'OK'?
9. Have you noticed that after Tuesday, the calender goes W T F (Wednesday, Thursday, Friday)?

TV OF THE WEEK:

The Missing – BBC1

SONG OF THE WEEK:

This Town – Niall Horan

1s

MERTON FC 2

BANK OF ENGLAND 2

(MERTON FC WIN 4-2 ON PENALTIES)

MERTON FC TAKES DOWN THE BANK OF ENGLAND!!!

I'm not talking about your rubbish holidays, because of the tumbling pound, but a massive win in the Surrey/Kent Cup.

It's always a good trip to the Bank. The pitch and facilities are good and it's local so everyone arrives on time, apart from Sam, Jonny and Chaz of course. It always takes longer than you think chaps!! There was the added bonus for me of having my picture taken at the toss, for the second time this season. My reputation as the David Beckham of the SAL is spreading.

The first half was an entertaining affair with some good football played. Bank were energetic and played some good football with good movement in midfield. We defended well and got in behind them with some searching balls from Woody. The half raced by and despite the good football on display, very few chances were created by either side, and it looked like being 0-0 at half-time. That was until Ben was tricked by Bank of England's centre forward into giving away a penalty. Their centre midfielder put it away very confidently and it looked like we'd go in one down. That was before an inspired substitution by the ref. He insisted on Tom leaving the field, because of some blood on his knee, to be replaced by Charlie. Within minutes of coming on Charlie had equalised with a strong shot across the keeper. It's what he does.

We regrouped at half time, Van made excuses for his mistakes and I dropped the oranges in the mud, and we went out confident we could get something out of the game.

Bank of England started much stronger than us and we were soon on the back foot. They dominated possession and the game started to become spread. Midway through the half, from a good break down their left, the ball was crossed and their centre forward made no mistake, bringing the ball down and calmly slotting past Siri. They had further chances to take the game out of reach but over confidence and some good goalkeeping from Siri kept it at 2-1.

A feature of our new look side this season is the presence of some more leaders who don't take it lying down. A few robust Bank of England challenges, coupled with an annoying amount of appealing, got us fired up. Sam, Chaz and Will were biting into challenges, Tilley's long throws, "I didn't know I could do that!" were causing havoc in their back line and with less than 10 minutes to go we equalised. A great tackle from Chaz, deep in our half, the ball was played forward (can't remember who by), it broke across the box (again not sure how) and Jonny was on the spot to ram home to make it 2-2 and take the game into extra-time.

Helpfully their coach told them, very loudly, that they were "the better team", "the fitter team" and "they wanted it more." This just made us more determined not to lose now we'd got ourselves back into it twice.

They again had the better of the game, but more excellent defending from our back four and some very good saves from Siri meant extra-time passed with no further score and it was penalties.

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We'd got this far and we weren't going to lose now. Chaz, Sam, Nick and Charlie all put their penalties away with aplomb, but the star of the show was Siri with two excellent saves and we won 4-2.

A great performance all round but some special mentions to Chaz who was very strong at the back, Will Low filling in at left back, is there anywhere he can't play? Tilley coming on at right back and Woody and Sam driving us forward from midfield.

TEAM: Siri, Young Ben Victory (Tilley 60), Chaz, Clappers, Will Low, Sam, Woody (Milo 70), Nick, Jonny, Tom (Charlie 40) and Vanny (Woody 80, Ben 90)

SUBS: Not sure how many subs they had, I count five.

MAN OF THE MATCH: Siri (he's a very good keeper between the shouting!)

DICK OF THE DAY: A rollover to next week



Merton FC 1s: Tilley getting our new sponsor maximum exposure at the Bank

2s

MERTON FC 1 ST JAMES OLD BOYS 2

Merton had only poor finishing to blame as they suffered a disappointing defeat at the Allianz Arena/a tiny pitch quite near it.

As with last week, some pre match mind games were employed with Ryan and Jason walking off to the far side of the field together. The seemingly romantic stroll turned out to be a pitch inspection, followed by a request to move the game to said pitch. The team made the trek over to said pitches only to find a pitch full of ankle breaking ruts and trenches, once again making us wonder what Ryan and Jason were really doing...

Back on the miniature pitch, Merton lined up in a 4-4-1-1, with Glenn given a free role and told to go win us the game. No pressure lad! With Sherbs away Fitz gallantly took on goalkeeping duties and Jason moved from centre forward last week to partner Pearcey at the back.

After a even first ten minutes, Merton started to dominate, with Dan leading the line and closing down the opposition, backed up by Alex and Joe in wide positions and Glenn helping to link the play. Behind them, Ryan and Stoney were snapping into tackles and the back four was looking solid.

Chances came quickly. First great work from Joe down the right resulted in a shot for Glenn from the edge of the area that flew just wide. Dan very nearly latched on to a poor backpass, blocking the attempted clearance with the supporting Alex just unable to take advantage. Another flowing move saw the ball held up by Dan and then worked from left to right via Glenn, Joe and Alex. The resulting cross was turned goalwards on the stretch by Dan from a narrow angle only to be cleared off the line.

A goal was coming and it duly arrived on the half hour. More great work from Joe down the right saw him help a ball inside towards Dan. The ball sat up and as keeper (who had spent the opening half hour alternatively swearing at his teammates or flying out of goal to claim every ball remotely near his box), defenders and striker all converged Dan lifted a calm finish over the lot and watched the ball dip into the top right corner to make it 1-0.

Dan was afforded only a brief celebration before being hooked for Tom, as Merton decided to add further pace to proceedings. More chances came - Alex shot straight at the keeper from 12 yards after another great team move, Tom screamed down the left ala bale (beating two men for pace despite being forced off the pitch and over the bags at the side of it) only for his shot to be blocked/saved. Glenn also put another effort at the keeper from 18 yards.

One-nil down at half-time and the consensus was that 3 points were there for the taking. Rainer came on for Joe as one further change was made.

Unfortunately the oppo had also had the chance to assess things at the break, bringing their keeper on up front in a maverick move (sadly they found someone else to go in goal). They started the second half better and the game felt a lot more even than previously, with the back 4 under more pressure and the game quite stretched.

In honesty there was a bit of cheating from both sides in terms of not tracking, especially as the game got stretched, but Merton remained very dangerous and continued to create chances when the ball was won

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high up the pitch. First, Tom overran the ball when it looked like he was clean through, and when he made amends in a similar situation to cross the ball to the back post, Glenn agonisingly just failed to reach it (think gazza in 96).

At the other end Fitz had made a couple of solid stops from St James counters, and bone crunching tackles were flying in from Jason(y),Pearcey,Clowesy and Gresty among others with the magic spray making its first appearance of the season.

This eventually forced a change as Jason limped off to be replaced by the returning mustard (great to have him back from injury). Clowesy moved to cb with mustard going to rb.

The impact was immediate but unfortunately not in a good way. A long diagonal saw the oppo striker and mustard chasing the ball towards the corner. As the ball looked to be running out of play from mustards initial interception, a desperate hook of the boot from the oppo forward flicked the ball against mustards hand from all of 6 inches away. Everyone prepared for a corner only for the ref to award the penalty! The keeper/now striker slotted it into the bottom corner for 1-1.

Merton tried to respond immediately with another couple of promising attacks resulting in wayward shots, but it was the home team who continued to press and took the lead. A corner was cleared to the edge of the box, where an unmarked opposition player calmly took an age before passing through a crowd of players into the corner to put them 2-1 up.

Merton rallied with a series of attacks that still failed to yield a goal. Glenn absolutely laced a cut back from Alex just over the bar (the noise was quite something) before Tom seemed destined to equalise as he was played in one on one with the keeper on a slight angle. The keeper stayed rooted, tom kept coming and 6 yards out it seemed a certain goal. As the crowd began to celebrate the shot instead clipped the outside of the near post and went behind for a goal kick. Tom looked at his boots in astonishment.

Going into the last few minutes, Dan was recalled from the bench as Merton loaded the area and went 4-3-3. He almost got a second after a quick throw from Ryan but a defensive block saw only a corner and despite an almighty late scramble the home side held out for the win.

It was a very disappointed Merton team that returned to the dressing room. Even more so when it turned out we had the dubious honour of being the first team to lose to St James in the SAL. The only silver lining came in the form of the abundance of food left over by an Irish christening party going on in the bar in the bar – a buffet the likes of which will never be seen in the sal again. Our hosts excelled themselves.

MAN OF THE MATCH: Alex, an almost constant threat down the left.

DICK OF THE DAY: The man, the returning (slim-line) handball legend that is Mustard.

3s

MERTON FC 1 CIVIL SERVICE 1

(MERTON FC WIN 3-2 ON PENALTIES)

A newly turfed...ish Hood ground set the scene for a blustery cup tie, the first of the season for the Boars'.

Virtually a new team from the previous weeks' fixture, Merton set up in to a 4-5-1 formation with a late (and delighted) deputy of Frankie in between the sticks.

Skipper for the afternoon was Tony P. Merton started the game quietly, with the oppo having a lot of possession for the first 10 minutes of the half.

Lofty's team had to make a change with the left back Alex taking a hard knock in a challenge, and had to be subbed after 15 minutes. Andy L then came on, and Ricky moved to left back. Between Ricky and Tony they had the non-enviable task of keeping tabs on their right winger for the entirety of the game.

A new back line kept cool and calm, and Merton nullified a few early threats on goal from Civil service,

Alberto was brought in to a deep-holding midfielder role in front of the two centre halves after 15 minutes. All of the oppo play was coming through the middle and held up by the two of their forwards. Alberto took up the role of sitting in front of Tony and Alex.

With more time in front of the back four now, Merton tried to press and switch the ball from side to side to Andy or Iain. With the pace, and also now the florescent pink boots that Donno has, Merton tried to utilise his pace by building play up either side of the oppo central defence for Donno to run on to.

The midfield was heavily swamped in the centre of the park from both sides around the half hour mark, and with limited chances up front, build up play down each wing was our best chance of creating something. Donno had so far been marked by their 6ft giant of a centre half up to this point, with every through ball attempted coming straight back to us.

The best chance of the half came from a through ball from the defence. Tony collected the ball from a throw in from Ricky on the left side. After turning past their forward who was had been tight the whole game, the midfield space in front opened up and a lofted through-ball to Donno presented an almost 'one-on-one' situation which rather than being slapped by the new pink boots, rolled down his leg in to the grateful keepers' hands. Best chance of the game so far.

Further through balls to the Merton wingers were proving to be the threat that the oppo could not deal with.

The midfield were trying to hold the ball longer, although improvement on shape was needed. The back four were resolute and stuck to their shape throughout, something that Lofty had emphasised before the game must be focused on. A few scrappy chances, mainly created through the oppo by-passing the Merton midfield straight to their pacy winger were not taken, although Frankie made a great save with 10 mins of the half to play.

The breakthrough for Merton came just after, with Merton passing the ball across the back four from side to side, eventually to Andy L on the left side who was brought down in the area. Penalty given.

Tony P placed the ball on the spot and in a Di Canio fashion calmly executed a panenka down the middle of the goal to make it 1-0 to Merton towards the end of the half.

Further chances were spawned by Merton, with a frustrated Donno picking up a booking. It was clear that

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James with his pace and quality needed the ball more to feed the forwards, and for Merton to hold the ball more in midfield.

All in all an encouraging half for Merton, one which we deserved to be ahead in.

Second half, James off and Joe (with beard) on to provide that ball kept and retained in the midfield. The oppo made no changes and started the second half well. Balls out to both of their wingers followed the same pattern as the first half. The oppo started the second as they did the first half on the front foot. Lessons learned from the first half, keep shape throughout, keep possession higher up the pitch, and ball on floor. The first chance of the second half for Merton came from possession held in the middle of the park, Alberto, to Dave S – whom produced a great through ball to Joe, who rather than shooting dragged back and squared to Donno who struck an effort that was on target straight to the defender, collected the rebound and squared to Joe who blasted over from 5 yards out. Opportunity missed.

The game became stretched with the Merton midfield legs tiring. Ricky was doing a great job, keeping tabs on their best player. A cut inside from their winger saw a great save from Frankie palm this over the bar. The subsequent corner led to a clearance by the head from Tony to the edge of the area, Merton did not clear and after a bit of pin-ball, a fortunate cross in by their winger then landed to their forward who had been static for most the game - ball tamely struck past Frankie in to the goal. 1-1 with 20 mins left to play.

Feeling hard done by Merton rallied and held the ball down in midfield, James L coming back on. The two centre halves cleared danger over and over as the oppo pressing became routine and predictable. Great play by Dave S and James L nearly resulted in a Merton equaliser, however the goal did not come. A twisting and turning run by Donno through the centre circle, past 4-5 oppo players almost resulted in an opportunity, yet the score was to end 1-1 at full-time.

STRAIGHT TO PENS!

Having been 2-0 down from the first two spot kicks, Merton needed a hero. Or as it turned out...four!

Donno, James, and Dave S put away their spot kicks, with Civil Service subsequently missing two in a row after putting in their first two. 3-2 to Merton. Civil Service had to score their final spot kick to make it 3-3 and go to sudden death.

Frankie held his nerve and stood firm in the centre of the goal to save the spot kick and a jubilant Merton progressed to the next round with a 3-2 win on penalties.

A game that should have been put to bed in normal time, but Merton showed a togetherness and team spirit that could not be broken.

On to the next round boars ... on we trot..

TEAM: Frankie, Alex K, Tony (c), Tom R, Alex W, Alberto, Dave S, James L, Iain, Donno, Ricky

SUBS: Andy L, Joe S

SCORERS (NORMAL TIME): Tony P (pen) 35 mins

SCORERS (PENALTIES): Donno, James L, Dave S

BOOKED: Donno

MAN OF THE MATCH: Frankie (penalty wizard)

DICK OF THE DAY: Donno (the boots/the booking/the volatile flirting with the ref ..?)

4s

MERTON FC 1 POLYTECHNIC 5

Another mild day at the Hood cast the perfect setting for the 4s to start turning their season around. The Vets before them had shown how it was done in an entertaining exhibition, but after a heart to heart the week before in the dressing room, and the decision to arrive earlier for the warm up (which almost everyone adhered to!), everyone was ready to simply get a win.

Polytechnic were the opposition, a side who'd made a good start to the season themselves, and with plenty of young blood in their side, were clearly not going to be a walk over. The game started with Merton making a point of pressing, keeping their voices up and trying to come out of the blocks fast.

Joe won a free kick early doors. Mike got a flick-on header onto the delivery, which the keeper fumbled. The rebound fell nicely to Mike, but unfortunately he wasn't able to nutmeg the keeper and eventually a good chance was snuffed out.

Not long after, Poly hit back on the counter. A teasing through ball split the defence, but Kieran did ever so well to come off his line and clear it. Of course, this is a team not having things their own way, and as damned luck would have it, his clearance struck a Merton player in the back, deflected to the opposing striker just outside the box, and he lobbed the ball in to make it 1-0.

No one's fault there, but the second goal was perhaps avoidable. Kieran didn't quite get enough on his kick, but Poly were able to cut through the defence a little bit too easily. The other striker made no mistake as the ball fell invitingly to him and slotted it home into the left corner.

But unlike previous games, Merton weren't about to fold like a house of cards. They came back strong, chased balls down doggedly, and created their share of chances. Dan had a goal disallowed, and there were numerous dangerous free kicks in the Poly half of the pitch.

It was through one of these that the goal arrived. This time Dan turned provider with an excellent delivery. The keeper palmed it off only as far as Sonny on the edge of the box, and he clinically volleyed it home to pull it back to 2-1.

It was the lift the 4s had so desperately been craving, and they came out hard after that, making life uncomfortable for Poly, who suddenly lacked the forward thrust they'd seemed to have earlier. Joe, Darcy, Sonny and Dom were closing them down like maniacs, and Dan was an ever-present to clean things up.

Unfortunately, just before the half, the new curse of corners struck yet again. The initial ball was dealt with, but Merton switched off at the far post, leaving a number of Poly players free. The free-est of headers resulted, and their man put it away to make it 3-1.

It was a crushing blow, and meant the half-time chat was a whole lot more negative than it might have been. Merton had been much improved on the events of seven days' prior, but the scoreline was rather gut-wrenching. Onwards and upwards though, and they knew they were one goal away from being back in it.

They made a decent enough start, and created chances almost from the off. Poly themselves weren't dealing with crosses and free kicks particularly well, while Dom and Darcy cut through their defence on more than one occasion. But in truth, Poly were having their share of chances too, and might have put the game away sooner than they did.

But miserably, it was a corner which did for Merton for the fourth goal. Mike won his header, but only

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managed to lob it back into the danger area. Under pressure, Merton weren't able to get onto the follow up, and a man in red pounced to nod home.

4-1 soon became 5-1, this time Chris not quite able to get enough on his clearance, although the finish from the oppo striker was hugely impressive.

But 5-1 wasn't the fairest reflection of how the game had gone; rather just indicative of mistakes made by Merton than any sustained Poly dominance. And the last 15 minutes proved that. Merton were all over the visitors, and chance after chance fell to the front three. Unfortunately, their keeper simply had a blinder, and thwarted each and every one of them.

On another day, those would have gone in, and three of four goals wouldn't have flattered the hosts. But it wasn't to be. In fact, the game ended in slightly acrimonious circumstances, with Dom taking exception to some pushing and shoving from the Poly defenders and keeper. Fortunately, the ref decided not to brandish the card we all feared.

And with Dom available for next week's showdown in the deep, dark North, hopefully Merton can build on what was unquestionably an improved performance in the Cup next Saturday. This team isn't as far away as they think. All they need is a win. Goodness me, let's hope it comes next week.

TEAM: Kieran Lee (GK), Ed Plaistow, Mike Todt, Chris Outred, John Gridley, Noor Emad, Joe Plumridge, Dan Gridley, Darcy Yates, Sonny Kennedy, Dom Plumridge

SUBS: Carl Kewley, Ryan Burchell

BOOKED: Dom Plumridge

MAN OF THE MATCH: Sonny Kennedy

5s

MERTON FC 1 OLD WILSONIANS 0

Saturday, another game.

Aaron Byrne here giving you the weekly match report due to Luke's mysterious disappearance. I have been told he is waiting to be released from daycare... Lets hope order is soon restored.

Top of the table clash against Old Wilsonian's. An away game with a lot at stake, could the magnificent 5's actually top the table? With Merton 5's on a roll, another day at the office, 4 from 4 was the mindset before the game.

"Can lightning strike four times?" was Dwayne Bedford's motto before the game. Im sure the boy was itching to take another tumble ;) Meanwhile Josh seemed intent on getting the match ball this week as he arrived with his game face on, maybe it was all the Zlatan comparisons that had him motivated. Our beloved Jayden Smith never fails to entertain and did himself no favours when he was quite frankly showing off his rear end to the lads during the stretches, lucky for him Lee Leenihan was not with us. If you've played for Merton 5's before you should be familiar with Naked Lee Time by now.

Merton 5's started the game on the back foot, allowing the home team to have more of the possession for the first 15/20 mins or so. We soaked up pressure the first 15 mins thanks to our marvellous De Gea in goal. Our amazing Sam did not seem to be affected by his birthday antics the night before, pulling off 4 fantastic saves in the first half! Both teams created a few decent chances, but the defence was solid.

Josh was reading everything at the back, not allowing his attacker a sniff of space. We even had Dwayne dropping back, with brilliantly timed sliding challenges, perhaps a potential change in position? Merton looked particularly deadly on the counter, bursting out from the wings, with good link up play with the two men up front. Ackers and Clive did a good job in holding the ball up in the centre of the park.

The moment came around the 30th minute mark, Super Sam played a brilliant long ball from the goal kick, that flew over the whole midfield, into the path of the centre backs, allowing the tricky Aaron Byrne to latch onto it. Noticing the keeper sleeping of his line, he casually hit a brilliant 30 yard lob timed to perfection which dinked over the keeper into the back of the net. Poor keeper was caught up daydreaming probably thinking about his next pint, to be fair he did try his best to make it back, i'm sure lots of calories were lost in that moment.

Another good half by merton, in truth the first 30 mins of this half were a lot easier than the remainder. This game should of been dead and buried by the 60-70th mark..

Striker Dulanje had a handful of chances that could of been in the back of the net on another day, I should have also added to my tally with a miss in the box that led to a throw in to the opposition. We both blame the rain for not having a brace each. Even Delman got in on the misses almost defying the odds with a goal, after making a great run. Rich played a deeper role in the second half holding the ball up well bombing forward like a mighty white Yaya Toure.

Substitutes Anam, Tom Reid and Steve Harvey all filled in well to grind out the result in the end, playing positions they don't usually play in for the benefit of the team. Well done lads.

The last 15 minutes was a tight affair, with the team going into defence mode to grind out the result,

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although a few counter attacking chances missed could of made it 2-0.

Full-time, another clean sheet and a 1-0 victory. 3rd in the league (only on goal difference). Come on!

TEAM: Sam, Delman, Josh, Darren, Steve B, Aaron A, Clive, Aaron B, Dwayne, Dulanje, Rich

SUBS: Tom, Anam, Steve

6s

MERTON FC 1 OLD SALESIANS 4

Another frustrating scoreline for Merton 6's, going down 4-1 at home to Old Salesians 3's with the result not matching the performance. It was a very evenly matched game played in a competitive nature where either team would have been happy to walk away with a draw. It just seems that the team is being punished for every mistake or lapse of concentration so far this season and our attacking play not yielding the goals it deserves. At least the cup games are giving the squad the opportunity to get these issues out of the system before the league fully gets under way.

Old Salesians pinched the lead from a corner midway through the first half, a very good delivery came in and after a scramble which included a brave goal-line clearance from Ty (well a ball smashed flush in the face and little was known about it!) the ball fell kindly to an unopposed player to slot home. Merton nearly drew level when a delivery from Paul found Pete who produced a spectacular volley which somehow the goalkeeper managed to save and to be honest it just hit him, again Merton not getting the rub of the green.

The game continued to go back and forth with little other opportunities in the first half and Merton going in 1-0 down at half-time. The second half began with Merton on top, but the side could not quite find the composure in the final third to convert the pressure into goals. Corners, free kicks and long shots came without a serious threat on target. The gaffer was beginning to throw his toys out of his pram as Chris tried his best with a few long range efforts into the children's playground. Paul kept getting down the flank countless times with deliveries from the touchline without the players attacking the area to be able to convert.

Then it happened out of nothing Merton found themselves 2-0 down. There was no massive danger and the defence was well-placed. A through ball blocked by Femi diverted out of the way of the collecting goalkeeper Lee with the ball almost in slow motion dribbling over the line, another massive slice of bad luck. It could of got worse if it wasn't for another goal line clearance from Ram, a corner dropped inside the six yard area and with the ball blocked on the line by Ram, a scramble ensued and with the ball trickling to the goal, Ram managed to turn back and clear the ball off the line.

Merton's heads remained high and the team continued to fight and then finally we were back in the game at 2-1. A delivery from a set-piece found the gaffer in space who leapt like a salmon to nod the ball over the approaching goalkeeper. As the last 10 minutes approached and with Merton chasing the game, two quick goals killed the game. The third goal was gifted to the Old Salesians, a poor goal kick from Lee went straight to their forward who ran down the left and his shot was diverted in by their right winger. The fourth goal came from a free kick which was poorly punched and the ball fell on the head of their right winger again who calmly nodded into an empty net. Less said about how these two goals, the better. Let's just say all four goals could have easily been avoided.

The positives are that despite the scoreline, the games have been competitive, good football has been played and the team has always fought until the end. If it wasn't for mistakes and bad luck, the results could have been very different. Let's hope the football gets the results it deserves when the league season begins.

TEAM: Lee, Ram, Chappell, Kevin, Femi, Ty, Jamie, Chris, Dan P, Paul, Pete

SUBS: George, Josh, Malcolm.

MAN OF THE MATCH: Close this week with Kev, Chris, Jamie, Ty and Ram all having two votes each until the last vote came in. The final vote went to Ty somehow!!! Maybe it's because I'm writing the match report or because I moaned at everyone for not voting but I promise it was no fix. Gaffer voted for me and said it's because I always tried to do the right thing, not necessary that it always came off.....

DOG OF THE DAY: Even though he helped us out, Lee is awarded Dog for some flapping mistakes.

10 | PLAYER PROFILE

TEAM: 1s

POSITION: CENTRE MIDFIELD, RIGHT BACK, LEFT BACK, RIGHT MIDFIELD

BIRTH DATE: 06/12/1985

BIRTH PLACE: SHREWSBURY

PREVIOUS CLUBS: BRIDGNORTH TOWN, SHREWSBURY TOWN,
STAR ALUMINIUM, HORSFORTH FAIRWEATHER

WILL LOW



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

I work at Lord's doing tech projects which combines the two things I'm most interested in, sport and technology. I'd describe myself in 3 words as quiet, laid-back, reliable.

2. How did you end up at Merton FC?

I found the club on Gumtree while looking for a team when I moved to London. I checked out 2 teams, the first had 5 turn up for training while Merton had about 50 so I stuck with them.

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

Getting promotion to Division 1 in 2014.

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

Wolves, I support them.

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

Arrive early to get a medium sized shirt.

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

Promotion back to Division 1.

Player of the season (so far): Kevin De Bruyne

Childhood Team: Wolves

Favourite team in the UK: Wolves

Favourite team outside the UK: Borussia Dortmund

Childhood Hero: Ryan Giggs

Favourite Food: Pepperoni Pizza

Favourite Drink: Neck Oil IPA

Favourite Band: Oasis

RAPID FIRE

POSITION: LEFT BACK, RIGHT BACK, CENTRE MIDFIELD

BIRTH DATE: 02/02/1975

BIRTH PLACE: MIDDLESEX

PREVIOUS CLUBS: WINCHMORE HILL, ALEXANDRA PARK

RAM MAHBUBANI



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

I am a Graphic Designer working for a publishing company in North London specialising in the maritime industry. You may not know, but I also put together the Merton Way every week.

If you read 'Ram's Heads Up' then you might have drawn your own conclusions as to what kind of person I am, but I'm just a down to earth bloke who enjoys a good laugh but likes doing things against the norm.

2. How did you end up at Merton FC?

I was looking for a club near Sutton as my girlfriend lives down there as the travelling after football/cricket from North London on a Saturday evening was tiresome and long. So now I find myself travelling down on a Saturday morning from Wembley.

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

Not many memorable ones, that's the problem when you play consistently well each week. Seriously, I would have to say first goal for the club against Civil Service. A left foot volley from the edge of the box with the goalkeeper nowhere near it.

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

FC Barcelona, my second team. To play that kind of football every week and in the Nou Camp would be a dream.

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

To make sure I have atleast one shot at goal, otherwise I don't get many chances during the game.

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

To have a winning season with the sixes. That means win more than we lose!
Also to be competitive in all our matches.

Player of the season (so far): Heung-Min Son
Childhood Team: Tottenham Hotspur
Favourite team in the UK: Tottenham Hotspur
Favourite team outside the UK: FC Barcelona
Childhood Hero: Glenn Hoddle
Favourite Food: Girlfriend's stews/casseroles
Favourite Drink: Single Malt Whisky on the rocks
Favourite Band: The Roots

RAPID FIRE

U9s

MERTON FC 2 ESHER WIZARDS WHITES 0

With a 100% league record and a weekend with no fixtures it seemed like a good idea at the time to accept a friendly match against the unbeaten Esher Wizards some 4 divisions above us. The day before the match this seemed less of a good idea in the knowledge that we would be without three key team members. We trained with slightly different tactics and formations to deal with the absences and went into the game confident.

Match day was another lovely sunny morning, the warm up showed our opposition to be full of skilled individuals, ohh gord this was going to be a tough test, made tougher still by another missing team member. We are now 4 short from our squad of 12 facing an extremely good team!!

First half delaying kick off and re-shuffling the team again to adapt to this last minute upset and playing an untested formation the whistle blew and we went straight on the attack down the left, Jack beat his marker flew down the wing into the area and shot just wide. Esher looked to be rattled by the power and pace of our attack and seemed tentative on the ball to start. The game settled and merton looked to be winning most the battles around the field and looked in the early stages to be dominant. Im not sure if its the bright yellow kit that is blinding our opponents but in the sunshine and in full flight we looked like we outnumbered Esher and dealt well with any attacks. Our late player arrived and we bought of danielus who had performed admirably but was now able to revert to our well trained formation and started to take control of the game, finally the constant pressure and attacks resulted in a penalty when Darius was clear through the centre of defence into the area with just the keeper to beat was hacked down from behind. He got up to slot the ball confidently home to give Merton a 1-0 lead.

The second half Esher came out with a changed formation and looked a much bigger threat, but the better they played the better we played. Doo ho in goal made some wonderful saves, and presley playing as our last man was superb. darius and callun controlled the midfield and jack and harry as our wingbacks both gave personal best performances. Tom in his 5th game ever was our front man who hurried and pestered the Esher defence from start to finish with another personal best performance. Esher started to use the wingers for attacks as they could not get through our midfield, but our wingbacks where equal to them running them out of play and winning the throws time after time. Although Esher had some superb individual players the teams looked balanced and we never really looked like loosing our grip on the game, a 2nd goal



Merton FC U9s: handshakes all round at the end of the game

9 | YOUTH MATCH REPORT

was needed to finish them off and ease any tension (from the parents) and it came straight from the training ground. Harry putting in a great corner for Darius to fire home and make it 2-0 to Merton... fantastic! Late on with Harry tiring we brought on Sam who got straight into the action and had a great chance on goal fly wide.

This was just a friendly but it felt like a cup final, we have set the bar higher and our target is to maintain this level of play for the next few games and then shift it up another level, and we will.

Tom's Dad gave Man of the Match to Doo Ho for some great saves, but once again anyone of the boys could of have been given it.

Another great day for Merton U9s

Gary

U13s

MERTON FC 3 COULSDON COLTS 1

Merton FC played against Coulsdon Colts in the league. They put up a good battle, but after about 15 minutes McKenzie scored for Merton. Each side had some chances, but nothing came from them before half-time.

In the first 15 minutes of the second half, Marcus scored Merton's second of the match after a great cross from Hugo. Coulsdon got back in the game scoring after a mistake at the back to make it 2-1.

Midway into the half, Marcus scored his second and Merton's third and made it 3-1 to Merton.

In the dying moments of the match Freddy our centre back cleared the ball off the line to keep the score at 3-1 to Merton till the end of the game.

Alfie Barnett
Centre Back



Merton FC U13s: dabbing all the way

U15s

MERTON FC 6 HAMPTON YOUTHS 3

Main message after last week's result was to see a reaction. A strong start was made, and we raced into a 4-0 lead within the first 30 minutes. Jake D scoring a hat-trick after Malcin had scored a long distance free-kick for us to take the lead.

At this point we started to take our foot off the pedal, but made some changes to keep everyone active in the game. Hampton began to put pressure on us and carved out a goal on the final kick of the first-half.

Second-half began and we continued to be sloppy at times on the ball, handing possession over on numerous occasions which finally led to Hampton capitalising on a mistake to make it 4-2.

We began to improve and took a 5-2 lead, but again gifted a goal away and let them back into the game. We handed (literally) them a penalty, which Esteban excellently saved to keep our two goal lead.

We scored the final goal of the game to make it 6-3 to which it ended.

A good performance with things to work on. Well done again!

Daniel Woollard

WHO'S WHERE AND WHEN

SATURDAY 15 OCTOBER 2016

1s
CIVIL SERVICE v MERTON FC
Civil Service Sports Ground – 15:00

2s
MERTON FC v SOUTH BANK CUACO
Joseph Hood Recreation Ground – 15:00

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

4s
WINCHMORE HILL v MERTON FC
Paulin Ground – 15:00

5s
MERTON FC v POLYTECHNIC
Joseph Hood Recreation Ground – 13:00

6s
OLD BLUES v MERTON FC
Ham Playing Fields – 14:30

SUNDAY 16 OCTOBER 2016

U9s
MERTON FC v CARSHALTON ATHLETIC
Joseph Hood Recreation Ground – 11:00

U11s
MOLESEY JUNIORS v MERTON FC
Away

U13s
MERTON FC v ROCKS LANE UTD
Joseph Hood Recreation Ground – 11:00

U14s
MERTON FC v STONELEIH ATHLETIC
Joseph Hood Recreation Ground – 11:00

U15s
HANWORTH SPORTS v MERTON FC
Away

MERTON FOOTBALL CLUB

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