

# THE MERTON WAY



# XMAS

## JUMP-OFF



It was a pretty good weekend for Merton FC with a good set of results. I watched the 1s and 2s in their home games. The 1s beat Economicals in the AFA Surrey Kent Cup 3-1. Economicals are a good side and in fairness things did not really go their way. The 2s beat Kew 9-2 and it was a little disappointing for Kew that they only had 10 men throughout. There are too many clubs in the SAL at the moment struggling to put sides out. We have been there in past seasons and managing a club with not quite enough members is very trying for the Managers/Captains. The 7s also at home had a good 2-2 draw and were disappointed not to win. The Youth section followed up on Sunday with a fine set of results.

I have been trying to upload videos on Facebook.



The first problem is taking videos of the match. I find that you can either watch the game or try and photograph it and the two, surprisingly are mutually exclusive.

Then it is uploading them which takes forever and seems to delete everything else you have posted. Any advice would be much appreciated. We do try and get stuff up on Facebook and it would be even better if you guys posted comments/responses/extra bits.

This coming weekend we have start our Christmas festivities with our 'Christmas Jumper' drinks in the bar. I hope that we will get a good turnout because it is such a good event and our bar is the best in the SAL.

So I look forward to seeing you all there and getting Christmas off to a good start.

## The Merton Christmas Party

**Saturday 3rd December (6pm-10.30pm)**

Beers, carols, games, team-mates, members old & new...oh yes and **CHRISTMAS JUMPERS!!!**

Celebrate Christmas with your teammates and the club down at the Hood.

**Please spread the word for an excellent night!!**

# THINGS TO KNOW

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## 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.

## VALUABLES

Please **DO NOT** leave any valuables in the changing rooms, and if a key is not available, take all belongings out to pitch side in your own kit bag or a team valuables bag.

**YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED!!**

## 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.

## SHOWERS

Teams that have an earlier kick off than other teams, can you please ensure you **TURN THE SHOWERS OFF** when leaving changing room.

Last weekend, the 4s had a Cup game and finished early, they kindly left the showers on and then there was no hot water for the 6s & 7s when they finished their games!!

# RAM'S HEADS UP

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**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. When at school, you never queried in a Maths lesson as to why people would buy 64 watermelons
2. If you say you're cooler than me... does that make me hotter than you?
3. I said to my girlfriend on our date night, my love for you is like diarrhoea... I can't hold it in!
4. Admit it... who hasn't listened to other people's conversations and mentally given your opinion?
5. I just read that last year 4,213,257 people got married. Shouldn't that be an even number?
6. Saw a girl on the train this morning and wondered if her eyebrows were sponsored by Nike.
7. Who was the greatest prostitute in history? Ms Pacman, for 50p she swallowed balls till she died.
8. **GIRLFRIEND:** What's the weather like today?  
**ME:** I'm no weather man, but you can expect a few inches tonight!
9. Is Google a man or woman? Obviously a woman because it won't let you finish your sentence without suggesting other ideas.

**TIP.** Guys, when introducing your girlfriend/wife to friends or family, always introduce her as your first girlfriend/wife. This will make sure she is kept on her toes.

**TV OF THE WEEK:**

The Crown – Netflix

**SONG OF THE WEEK:**

I Feel It Coming – Weeknd feat. Daft Punk

# 1s

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## MERTON FC 3 ECONOMICALS 1

**A**fter a well-fought win against BoE in the previous round, today brought us to the next round of the cup, against a team in similar standings in our rival league: **the Economicals from the AFC.**

The day didn't start on a high note given that, in true taking the p\*\*s style, Jonathan & Samuel turned up an hour late, with a very frustrated Chaz sitting in the back seat gearing up for an underserved bollocking - Clappers made it very clear that this wouldn't continue! Chaz couldn't agree more!

None the less, the team was full of familiar faces with Siri in Goal, Brauner RB, Clappers & Chaz CB & Nic filling in at LB. The midfield consisted of Woody, Tilley & Samuel, & a familiar front 3 of Jonathan, James & Chalie. The bench was made up of a very dynamic, Boshier, Joe, Elz & of course, Van was there on the sidelines studying the work of Merton's first choice wingers.

The game was off to a good start with both teams showing a good tempo to their movement & passing from the whistle. It was, at least until roughly 5 minutes in, when their keeper picked up a rather obvious pass back from his own midfielder which consequently led to an indirect free kick just inside their box. By all accounts, Sam had the audacity to offer that he take it, thankfully Woody came to sense quickly & stepped over the ball and take it himself. BOSH! 1-0 Merton! After an unexpected extra touch to take it away from the charging wall, Woody got his shot off & it found the net - good start!

The tone of the game continued from that point, with both teams continue to press each other at a good tempo & thus caused for a somewhat scrappy affair as the half wore on. Merton less and less tried to play out from the back, & instead started to play their percentages. This did work in our favor a number of times, resulting in nice link up play between Charlie, James and Jonny in order to turn their defence. Midway through the first half, Chaz received what was first thought to be a dead leg, however, he would later be



Merton 1s: Clappers giving the hairdryer treatment



Merton 1s: Man of the Match, Browner

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subbed to what would appear to be a pulled/torn thigh muscle.

The second half, & the game picked up from where it left off. Both teams hungry for the next goal & but for some very good defending from Clappers & Brauner, Economicals could have scored an early equaliser. I'm not surprised the Brauner, Clappers partnership worked out given that they've played together for years & Clappers certainly knows Brauners strengths & weaknesses. Siri was consistent as per usual, claiming the ball from set plays, look comfortable with a couple of sturdy shots & most importantly getting on everyone's back! Good ol Siri. Has to be said that the middle 3 of Sam, Woody & Tilley did a good job in weathering an early storm by continuously foresting for the ball in the middle not giving their midfielders much time at all - this eventually led to Merton's second goal. The midfield (Can't remember who) won the ball deep in our own half and sent Jonathan on his way down the right wing. Calm under pressure, Jonny squared it Charlie who made no mistake in slotting it home with a sidefooted, curling shot passed the keepers left. Word on the sideline was that it was like watching Pires & Henry!..... It has to be said, Charlie could of a hatrick, considering he missed 2 clear cut chances just after his first goal - Van was smiling with intent on the sideline.

Merton made clever subs with 20 minutes to go. The introduction of Boshier for Jonny, added a fresh, direct approach to our attack & Elz come on to provide energy in the centre of midfield for a tiring James. Elz got his reward for an impactful appearance off the bench by scoring Mertons 3rd (This amongst a number of smart passes and winning the ball back high up the field). Economicals nicked one back before the end finalising the final score at 3-1 to Merton!

After it was all said and done, Brauner was awarded a well deserved Man of the Match for a solid performance at both LB & CB. He did really well in staying tight to his man & generally played to his many strengths. Honourable mention for Nic with a couple of votes who put in a good performance whilst filling in at left back.

**MAN OF THE MATCH:** Brauner, for a solid performance at both LB & CB. He did really well in staying tight to his man & generally played to his many strengths. Honourable mention for Nic with a couple of votes who put in a good performance whilst filling in at left back.

**DICK OF THE DAY:** Chaz, I'm still not sure why. Standard votes went out to Van... because he is Van.....

# 2s

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## MERTON FC 9 KEW ASSOCIATION 2

“Such stuff as dreams are made on,” remarked nobody as we squeezed into the almost-never-used changing room 2 before kick-off. Cookie, ever nervous, newly old, was struggling to find a seat. “Be not afraid,” Percy, didn’t say. “The changing room is full of noises, sweet sounds and airs that give delight and hurt not.”

“I’ve brought the wrong bloody boots,” DQ did say, panicking, knowing ‘Dick of the Day’ was his. Things were not going well.

Still, Percy had spare boots, Merton 2s (as opposed to Merton 2’s, who are some weird outfit to which Lofty often refers) had a handsome squad of 14, and the weather was clement. To add to the joy, swathes of Kew’s squad had decided to get some Black Friday weekend shopping done and they’d turned-up with ten players.

We kicked-off, full of vigour, and not a little vim.

“We should break these down, just need to be positive,” said Gresty, hobbled, supporting from the sidelines.

“Percy, you clown,” said Ian, capturing the atmosphere as only he can.

In spite of Percy’s defensive shank (followed by a overwhelmingly solid performance and a delightful, loopy, deflected own goal), Team Handsome was playing something like well.

“He’s lost that,” said DQ, watching DK Milan Baros his way through the centre of the pitch. In actual fact, DK hadn’t lost it, and dragged the ball apologetically in the corner for 1-0.

2-0 came quicker than Cookie in an Asian disco, DK foxing the defence and lobbing the keeper like the wily old pro he isn’t.



Merton 2s: drinking in the bar after a great win



Merton 2s: Dick of the day downs punishment pint

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Annoyingly, Kew scored. A free header from a free kick.

“Bugger this,” thought Wilgo, sending a delightful cross over to Big Dave Scott, who made like Les Ferdinand in his better days and headed powerfully home. Later, BDS would score again, almost cracking a smile while doing so. His all-round play earned him ‘man-of-the-match’. So that was nice. The swift, cold pint, less so.

Scott’s second goal came midway into the second half and was one of nine, as the 2s romped very comfortably home. Wilgo scored one that was almost identical (right-hand side of the area, bottom-left corner finish) continuing his Indian summer in the Merton yellow.

Talking of ageing goalscorers, DQ did his best Nwankwo Kanu impression after a sexy Wilgo through-ball, curdling the defender’s blood before finishing probably in the corner he intended. He added a second after robbing the keeper 40 yards out and playing into the empty net. Sadly for Kew, their goalie was one of their two best outfield players.

Who were the other two scorers you ask? Well, not Tom Benham, who did everything but, ending the match more frustrated than Sherbs failing to avoid playing a game of Predator at the Christmas party. Chris Rayner, however, he scored, with his left foot, naturally. And Cookie, dear old Cookie, he did too, barrelling through and toe-poking home.

“I ain’t scored for two years,” Cookie said, hugging their left-back. The left-back didn’t seem to really care.

Mustard cared, Sherman-tanking around during an effervescent midfield cameo, though sadly not enough to get over technological snafus and muster his usual celebratory changing room DJ set. Instead, we all just gave each other high-fives, and handsome pats on the back, and fulsome compliments.

And that was that, our little match, rounded with goals.



3s

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NO FIXTURE

# 4s

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## MERTON FC 1 ACTONIANS ASSOCIATION 2

**A**fter an unfortunate result the week before, the Merton 4s looked to get back on the wagon on Saturday to regain some of the confidence that had been built up over the weeks before. With the 3s having no fixture, the 4s got a boost courtesy of some really good players such as Dan Rist, Joe Squire, Darcy Yates, Mike Gubby and also young Emmanuel Amoakoh.

A good thing too, because the opposition on the day were the table-topping Actonians, who have been in rampant form. Their main pitch provided a lovely setting, and with a solid-looking 4-4-2 formation in place, Merton were at the ready to put in a good performance.

But as has been the case quite often this season, they failed to get going in the early exchanges, and the first 10 or 15 minutes were all Actonians. Although clear-cut chance were few and far between, there was sustained pressure, and Merton were lucky to come out of it unscathed.

But the Yellows slowly began to gain a foothold in the game, and had some dangerous-looking attacks of their own. The midfield began to click into gear, and it was for this very reason that the opening goal came as a bit of a surprise. The ball was lost in the middle of the pitch, but the counter attack from the home side was brutally quick. Kieran came out towards him, but he was rounded, and the finish – from a very tight angle – was pinpoint to give Actonians a 1-0 lead.

It was a hammer blow, but Merton showed their mettle, and really dug in. In fact, they did more than that: they played some decent football, used the width of the pitch particularly well, and really looked a goal threat. And it was to pay dividends soon after, albeit in fortuitous circumstances.

Frankie eased his way into the box and got 'clattered' from behind. By his own admission, it was soft to say the least, but the ref blew his whistle, and, after some angry words from an incandescent home side, he pointed to the spot. Dom stepped up, with 14 sets of eyes praying he would slot it home. He didn't! The keeper pulled off a good save to his right. But, ever aware, Dom was there for the rebound and poked it home to make it all-square.

Merton were determined to make it count, and the heads went straight back on. And once again, they arguably looked the more likely of the two sides. Defensively they were solid, and each time the ball went down the flanks, Actonians looked unsure.

But once again, Merton fell foul to the pace of the oppo's devastatingly quick strikers. This time Joe wasn't quite able to get to a long ball, and their striker got in behind. A superb through ball put their striker one on one with Kieran, and the finish was clinical for Actonians to re-take the lead. It was a cruel blow on Merton just before the break.

But, if the first half was a decent showing, the second half was arguably the 4s best period of play in the season to date. Certainly given the strength of the oppo anyway. From the get-go, they were getting stuck in, and with Emmanuel's pace upfront and Dom as a constant threat, Actonians looked rattled. Numerous free kicks were won in their half, with Dom going very close, while Mike scrambled to get to a delivery that just

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didn't quite fall for him.

The subs did a great job too, with Joe and Mike Gubby having a positive impact, while Ryan was as solid as ever, albeit in a left-back role as the manager took a breather. Merton were ping-pong passes around, and putting on a display that was even quietly described as 'tika-taka' by some. It really was good to see.

In a half that Merton dominated, Actonians had the best chance courtesy of a highly dubious penalty – Frankie was judged to have handled the ball, despite there being barely any appeals from the oppo. But their striker who stepped up to take the spot kick never looked confident, and Kieran did brilliantly to palm his strike clear. 2-1, it stayed. Could Merton snaffle an equaliser?

Unfortunately not. They threw men forward, and had a number of half chances, but the ball just never quite fell for them when they needed it to, and eventually the ref blew the whistle for the final time on what had been a tremendous game.

Narrow defeats have sadly become a bit of a feature of this league campaign, but none were as courageous as this one and the lads walked off the pitch with their heads held high. If this sort of performance can be replicated against other teams, the points will fly in thick and fast.

**STARTING LINE-UP:** Kieran Lee (GK), Ed Plaistow, Mike Todt, Joe Plumridge, Dan Rist, Will Harrison, Darcy Yates, Chris Outred, Emmanuel Amoakoh, Frankie Kaligorou, Dom Plumridge

**SUBS:** Joe Squire, Michael Gubby, Ryan Burchell

**GOAL:** Dom Plumridge

**MAN OF THE MATCH:** Dan Rist

**DICK OF THE DAY:** N/A

# 5s

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## MERTON FC 0 POLYTECHNIC 0

It was the mysterious case of the cancellation of the 9th team. Somehow, in this crucial cup game, the 9s suspended their game and ended up supporting their 8s in a ferocious battle that lasted to the death.

Chiswick has been our home from home in recent weeks, however King George's Playing Fields has now become our home from home from home. We settled in quickly, and it was the 5s who had the first chances. Had the referee not have got the memo from last time out that Dulanjie is always offside, we would have gone ahead early doors and never looked back! There were at least 2, maybe 3 instances where he was clearly onside, clean through yet called offside. It is no overexaggeration to say he would be at least 4 goals better off if these really suspect calls had not been made. Dulanjie shouldn't be disheartened because one day the floodgates will surely open!!

So our chances instead fell to those who you'd want them to in the first half. One of their clearances from a corner dropped to Darren, who adjusted well to volley narrowly over. A similar situation played out for Steve Burchall, except he didn't adapt well and the ball flew out of the ground for a home run - the referee did not look amused at the suggestion that it should count!! A good move on the right saw Aaron cut my n tidier narrowly wide on the left. That was our pick of the first half, and apart from hitting the bar with an effort that he did well to get a foot on, they didn't make many chances as the 5s held strong at the back to make take a 0-0 into the first half.

The second half was a mix of excitement, nervousness and horror as the tightness of the game meant all players knew the single goal would be enough. The 5s again started strongest as the keeper made an unbelievable save to keep out a corner from Aaron that was heading straight into the top corner again. Steve managed to hit another home run (2-0 up on that front) before they asserted some pressure! One went across the box, and one went narrowly wide. The topsy turvey nature of the game then saw the 5s in control, and spurn the best chance of the game. Twice Dwayne broke through, once quite a difficult chance but hit the side netting. The second, he should of scored. Clean through, and about 4 yards from goal and it went further away rather than nestling in the back of the net! Like a massive hard on that came to fast, it ended up in disappointment.

One of the last moments of the 90 was to be pivotal. Their 9s top scorer, who is well known to the club, let rip from 20 yards. The effort was destined for the bottom corner; but for a big hand from Sam in goal. He flew from the other end to make a save that you'd be impressed with at a professional level. The speed of his reaction made it look easy, and was the last major chance before extra time.

The game ended 0-0 and there was only one team in it. Another good chance was spurned by Dwayne who was again a fraction unlucky. The marginalised Dulanjie saw an effort where he was uncharacteristically flagged onside (despite the fact he was indeed onside) stretch to almost lob the keeper.

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A game where we had the chances, but didn't convert one. A great performance nonetheless.

Pens can be a lottery, but of the two we scored out of the 4, neither were great. In the end we must take heart from our resoluteness and maintain our form in The league because it is certainly winnable!

**MAN OF THE MATCH:** but for getting in the positions, helping out a flakey (but very good looking) left back, it's Dwayne again! A very good performance at both ends that if he plays like this every week, he will score a hatful.

**DICK OF THE DAY:** for missing from 4 yards out, by such a large margin, is Dwayne.

Now, for some particularly sad news. I will be leaving the club to move up to Manchester. Since joining, it has been an absolute pleasure playing for the 5s and I think this is demonstrated by the way that everyone wants to play with us. Even last year when we were not doing very well, I feel like I have been part of a team. What Clive has done for this club should not be confined by the good job he did last season, he has built a formidable team this season and I will be expecting to read win after win when following Merton in the future.

# 6s

## MERTON FC 4 BANK OF ENGLAND 2

In the salubrious surroundings of the Bank of England club, Merton 6s stretched their unbeaten run to 5 games and did so in style.

We welcomed back a number of players both from injury and unavailability, so that we were able to field a very strong side. From the off we were all over Bank and they did well to repel the impressive attacks that came from our front 4 of Peter, Dan, George B and Callum. We never let Bank settle and after a number of near misses we took the lead after Georges shot rebounded to Dan who finished well into the unguarded net. It was 2-0 soon after when George B impressively rounded two defenders and audaciously chipped the keeper.

Bank finally began to get a grip on the game and often broke quickly using the pace they had up front and on the right wing. We had a number of warnings, before they got a goal back. After the ball was cleared by Bank, George H miss-controlled and the striker was on him in a flash, Beans (clearly worried about the guys pace) tried to tackle but missed and left the guy one on one with Swanny. The Guy finished well and Swanny got a knee in the head for his troubles from yours truly whose ageing legs were trying hard to cover!

Our two goal lead was restored soon after when the Bald Eagle soared onto the pinpoint corner from Ty. I'd gone close with a couple of corners before and it was a perfect ball from Ty and an easy header.

Bank were still working hard and the free flowing football of the first 20 minutes had deserted us for a time. Bank tried all the tricks they could, including trying to wind up Big Kev, but it was all to no avail.

Our fourth came from a flowing move. Both George and Callum were constant thorns in the side of Bank all afternoon and they linked up well for Callum to score a great team goal.

The second half should have been a procession, but in typical 6s style we just couldn't kill off the opposition, chance after chance went begging, and despite being 3 goals down, Bank to their credit would not give up. Chances of note should be mentioned... George B nearly scoring the goal of the season with a 40-yard chip drive that hit the crossbar, Callum kept his feet when fouled bursting in the box and the ref played on rather than give a penalty and The Bald Eagle headed over from 5 yards (although ref would've given a foul).

Despite Bank's pressure, largely helped by Merton losing our shape because of the substitutions, they just couldn't find a breakthrough. The defence held firm, learning from the mistake of the first half and never diving in on the quick forward, and whenever they got beyond the defence, Swanny was there, saving well on two occasions.

Then with 10 mins to go, Peter came back to assist the defence, and decided the best way to do this was to assault the Bank player on the edge of the box. The ref blew for a penalty... and it was 4-2.

It was a nervous last 10, but we held out and took all 3 points.

Let's get another win next week!

**STARTING LINE-UP:** Swanny (GK), George H, Mark, Adam, Kevin (Capt), Callum, Neal, Tyrone, George B, Pete, Dan

**SUBS:** Anam, Ram, Trey

**MAN OF THE MATCH:** Unanimous votes for George Brobby. Superb display and scary that he's only 16

**DICK OF THE DAY:** Split vote between Ty for his ridiculous half volley cross that went behind him and Peter for his GBH... AND ... (Drum roll)... It was Peter that pipped it. Better luck next week Ty.

# 7s

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## MERTON FC 2 OLD BLUES 2

**A**fter getting their first win of the season, the still adjusting 7s welcomed Old Blues at home. Playing on a more familiar pitch, Merton lined up in the classic 4-4-2 whereas Old Blues went for the newly fashionable 3-5-2. They had obviously watched some MNF and fancied themselves as tactical geniuses.

A bright start from Merton bought an early corner from which Adam B nodded just over, and the Old Blues seeing they would be exploited out wide, switched to the 4-4-2 to match up to Merton. This paid immediate dividends, the Blues picked up the ball between Noor and Dobson and with the Merton back 4 out of shape drove through and slotted it past stand in keeper Martin and the Old Blues had an early 1-0 lead.

For the next half hour, the 7s were under the cosh, the blues dominated possession of the ball and managed to force a few decent chances. Around the 20 minute mark, the away sides big man up top found himself one on one with Martin who made a brilliant one handed save, down low to his left to deny the Blues from extending their lead. Threatening further from a series of corners and free kicks whipped into the box, Merton managed to gain some control towards the end of the half.

Steve and Adam B started to impose themselves on the whiny number 8 of Old Blues and the 7s managed to create a few chances for themselves. After some pinball in the box the ball dropped to Noor, presenting him with the chance to put Merton back on level terms but he skewed his shot just wide. Soon the pressure became too much, with a through ball from Steve to Adam E who burst down the right flank and instead of shooting, opted to dink a ball across the 6-yard area. The keeper palmed it into the sky, with the ball dropping inches away from the goal line, Noor confidently chested it in to make up for his earlier miss. 1-1.

A crunching tackle by Tom R on the whiny number 8 of Old Blues was a particular highlight of the half and with Malcolm dropping back to add numbers to the midfield, Merton ended the half well with a bit more control.

Nathan entered the fray for the second half, tasked with keeping the number 8 quiet, he did a great job and this set Merton up well to be more competitive in the second half. There were few chances for either side in the second half with Martin dominating the box at corners and free kicks (a true jack of all trades!) and Merton doing well down the wings with the full backs pushing forward where possible.

Unfortunately the Blues regained the lead midway through the second half, the right winger played a lovely deep cross into the box which Josh managed to get a head on with the blues captain waiting to pounce behind. But the header diverted the ball back into the mixer, which Martin didn't manage to claim and after a small scramble the ball was at the feet of their captain who couldn't miss from 2 yards. 2-1 to the Old Blues.

Merton didn't let their heads drop and thought they were going to draw level when Josh intercepted a pass out from the back, and with the opposition back 4 out of position, played a lovely though ball to Scott which left him one on one with the keeper, unfortunately Scott's shot was saved (apparently, the ref gave a goal kick...) and it was still 2-1 to the blues.

The 7s were getting closer and finally managed to get make a chance count when Adam E found some

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space on the right after some good work and picked a lovely pass to find the other Adam in the box, he smashed home and it was 2-2 with 10 minutes left! The Blues hit the post with a lovely effort from outside the box but really there seemed like there would only be one winner with most of the chances falling to Merton at the end of the game. However they couldn't find the goal they needed and 2 all seemed like a fair result after a good game all round, onwards and upwards for the 7s.

**STARTING LINE-UP:** Martin (GK), Josh K-H, Dan A (C), Tom R, Dobson, Adam E, Steve, Adam B, Noor, Malcom, Scott

**SUBS:** Jon and Nathan

**MAN OF THE MATCH:** A close call but, Josh K-H for his marauding runs from full-back as well as tenacious defending. England's answer to Dani Alves?

**DICK OF THE DAY:** Again hard to call anyone out but Jack Taylor for not showing up and (as far as these reporters know) not telling us why, we miss his big beard



# ANDREW GRAVES (RAT)



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

Outside of the club I am a Director of a Pop-Up Bar Business that supplies bars for various events. Off the pitch I would describe myself as a fairly relaxed person who enjoys watching and playing pretty much any sport and having a good drink every now and then.

## 2. How did you end up at Merton FC?

I played with former Merton FC Legend Lewis Ackerman at Molesey. When we both left he asked if I wanted to come to the Hood and join. 30 minutes of Clappers taking the piss out of my nickname, half a pre-season game and a portion of Spaghetti Bolognese was all it took to persuade me that this was the club for me.

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

Reaching a cup final and promotion to Div 1 a few years ago are team highlights but my bicycle kick finish for the match deciding 3rd goal on Saturday (see last week's 1's match report) should live long in the memory for those that witnessed it....

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

Easy....Crystal Palace FC. To pull on the red and blue jersey and play in front of the country's best fans before having a night out with Sir Alan Pardew would be a true honour.

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

I try to take as long as possible to get changed thus avoid carrying the goals out. I also sit nowhere near Clappers if he has been taking Paracetamol during the week.

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

After last season's struggles, a top half finish would be great, but more importantly, to make sure our new younger team additions are enjoying their football with us and stick with the club.

**Player of the season (so far):** Alexis Sanchez

**Childhood Team:** Crystal Palace

**Favourite team in the UK:** Crystal Palace

**Favourite team outside the UK:** Valencia

**Childhood Hero:** Paolo Maldini

**Favourite Food:** Pizza

**Favourite Drink:** Any Craft Beer

**Favourite Band/Artist:** Coldplay

# RAPID FIRE

# MIKE 'MUSTARD'

# REED



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

Live in Essex with girlfriend and step-daughter. Work for the National Crime Agency. Volunteer for the Samaritans. As Neil Impiazzi did, back in my first season, I would describe myself as keen as mustard.

## 2. How did you end up at Merton FC?

Moved from Cornwall to London in July 2001, within first few days of starting my new job, asked the first bloke in his twenties / thirties that I could find if he knew of any local teams. He gave me Lofty's number, the rest is history.

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

Not necessarily the best, but so many memorable moments with MFC:

ranging from – scoring from a shot within the centre circle, having a free scoring purple patch on and off the pitch on club tour to Portugal and beating promotion rivals Old Parks away whilst having no more than 10 men on the pitch at any time, to – getting sent off after 0 seconds at Southgate Olympic, and getting cleaned out by the opposition keeper, again in Portugal, that led to me having foot surgery and missing approx 2 years of football (and putting on nearly 2 stone!)

The best 'moment' though was, the Lofty/Mustard double act of managing/captaining the 2s to promotion to division 1 in 2008/09 (the first Merton team to do so in 25 years) and then after a really hard fought season, retaining our place in the top division the following season.

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

Manchester United – I have supported them since I was 4 and followed them ever since. Growing up in Cornwall, supporting Man United was clearly a logical choice for me, given that they're right on the doorstep. Bryan Robson was my favourite player, he played for Manchester United and that's how it started for me.

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

On the morning of every game, I settle down in front of my laptop to see what's happening on the internet whilst enjoying a wholesome serving of beans on toast.

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

Aside of all teams across the club having a good season, my goal is to ensure that the 3s reach a respectable league position, in what is a higher league after getting promoted last year. At least half of our players are new and we're still in the process of finding our feet – they're a good bunch of guys with decent ability, so despite a tricky start to the season, there are definitely signs of encouragement.

**Player of the season (so far):** Glenn Pitmann (3s)

**Childhood Team:** Manchester United

**Favourite team in the UK:** Merton FC

**Favourite team outside the UK:** Real Madrid (as former Man Utd greats (Becks, RvN, CR7) joined them and I like to see their success continue)

**Childhood Hero:** Rocky Balboa

**Favourite Food:** Cornish Pasty (must be from Horse and Jockey)

**Favourite Drink:** Bloody Mary

**Favourite Band/Artist:** Massive Attack

# RAPID FIRE

# U9s

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## **MERTON FC 4 SPELTHORNE SKY 2**

**A** warm welcome awaited us in our first league game in our newly promoted division setting the tone for what was a fantastic match played with great competitive spirit with a tremendous sense of fair play from all involved with lots of strong committed tackles yet not a foul in the entire match. My favourite game of the season so far.

As the match got under way the teams looked even with threats on goal coming at either end with both keepers making important stops. We broke the deadlock with a well worked goal and then started to apply more and more pressure leaving Spelthorne unable to get out of their own half for large periods with an inevitable 2nd Merton goal flying in. Against the run of play we conceded a goal from a very well worked corner which we did not react to until the ball was in the back of the net. 2-1. We quickly got back into our stride and looked reasonably dominant enjoying the greater possession. The game ended 4-2 with a Merton penalty from a handball saved along the way. We look forward to the return match at the hood.

Most memorable moment this week is renamed managers humbling moment. One of our boys took a knock during a challenge and was subbed off in pain. As the game continued, the Spelthorne player involved came off the pitch to comfort our lad with concern and apologise.

Man of the Match awarded by Kalyan's Dad was given to Doo Ho in goal.

**Match report from:** Gary (U9s Manager)

# U11s

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**MERTON FC 5**

**CLAYGATE ROYALS HARES 4**

**M**erton got off to a great start, leading 0-3 with some great passing. Claygate then made a great comeback making the score at half-time 3-3.

Second half kicked off with Claygate getting a good break which lead to a fourth goal for them, putting Merton under pressure! The boys managed to get their shape back to equalise with our fourth goal from Cormac, making it 4-4. Then two minutes before full-time, William stole the show with another goal making the final score 4-5 and a hat-trick for him.

The crowd went wild!

Well done to all the boys today for a fantastic performance.

**GOALS:** William (3), Cormac (1), Matthew (1)

**Match report from:** Steve Davies

# U13s

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## MERTON FC 3 EPSOM TOWN YOUTH 1

**F**irst half, started off ok. Our midfield was a bit sloppy, we nearly scored a couple of goals and had more possession, Alfie skimmed the post. They liked pushing down the rightwings and we gave away couple of fouls and a penalty that was nearly saved by Milo, who got a touch on the ball, but it bounced off his fingertips and hit the top of the net. We also gave away a few set pieces due to the awkward pitch conditions, it was muddy! Evan, who'd come on for Kieran, scored the first goal for Merton, from left side & left foot straight into the bottom right corner just before half time.

The second half, we used all our subs, Alfie came off for Freddie in right back, Kieran came back on for Hugo and I came on for Theo and Steve put Evan in central attacking midfield and me on the right wing. We had more possession of the ball and more shots at goal. As I came on, one of the opposition fouled me in the back which gave us a free kick that Nikoy took, but the score stayed at 1-1. I made a few runs down the wing, got past 3 players, leading to a corner, where we just missed another goal. They got to our defence, we passed the ball away, which led to Marcus having a bit of a run and a cheeky one-two with Kieran, Marcus crossed it in, it was a low ball for Justin who tucked it away in the bottom left corner. 2-1 to Merton! We'd started getting under their skin and they started getting angry. Towards the end of the match, Marcus brought the score to 3-1, by having a shot that bounced just over the goalies hands and into the bottom right corner! I tried making another run, got the ball round the player but got studded in the ankle so came off injured. Hugo came back on, we started taking our time. It got to the end of the match, the whistle blew, we started cheering, we lined up, gave them 3 cheers and one for luck, they did the same and we all shook hands.

Overall, we had more possession, more shots, we were the better team and that showed in the end result. We're now 2nd place in the League, with a match in hand, we must carry on playing as well as we did today and improve where we can in training and...keep winning matches!! :)

**Match report from:** Isaac Tossio (Winger/Striker)

Merton U13s: Isaac in action



# U14s

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**MERTON FC 6**  
**HASLEMERE TOWN YOUTH 4**

**NO MATCH REPORT SUBMITTED**

# U15s

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**MERTON FC 0**  
**BEDFONT EAGLES 6**

**D**ifficult game today, in which we tried to rebuild the confidence and the morale of the team. It has been a difficult past couple of weeks with the team spirit deminishing as quickly as our good start to the season was. Today was about boosting our confidence, however it was a tricky game to do so.

Bedfont are a very strong outfit, scoring 58 goals prior to this fixture in 7 games of football.

We started the game extremely sloppy, conceding two goals in quick succession within the first 3 minutes.

After the mad 3 minutes we found our feet and settled into the game, creating a few good chances.

Which was a massive positive from today's game. Dan and Harrison making their debuts for the club today impressed throughout.

We had a solid remaining 30 minutes of the half and were still in the game at 2-0.

The second half started and it was back to the walls for Merton, with Bedfont pinning us in our own half for the majority of the game. We still broke and created chances throughout.

Two further goals were scored and our heads dropped. Bedfont ran away with it in the end, but overall we can be pleased with the better attitude and atmosphere around the team.

We move on now to look forward to a good December.

Darren and Dan are proud of the boys and what they are beginning to achieve. It's been a difficult few weeks, but we can see that they are turning it around.

A tough game today against the probable league winners

Good luck Bedfont, heads up Merton... we go again!

# WHO'S WHERE AND WHEN

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## SATURDAY 3 DECEMBER 2016

**1s**  
**MERTON FC v ALEXANDRA PARK**  
Joseph Hood Recreation Ground – 14:00

**2s**  
**HSBC v MERTON FC**  
HSBC Sports & Social Club – 14:00

**3s**  
**MERTON FC v OLD WILSONIANS**  
Joseph Hood Recreation Ground – 14:00

**4s**  
**CARSHALTON v MERTON FC**  
Beddington Park – 14:00

**5s**  
**CIVIL SERVICE v MERTON FC**  
Kings House Sports Ground – 13:30

**6s**  
**MERTON FC v MERTON FC**  
Joseph Hood Recreation Ground – 14:00

**7s**  
**MERTON FC v MERTON FC**  
Joseph Hood Recreation Ground – 14:00

## SUNDAY 4 DECEMBER 2016

**U9s**  
**CORINTHIAN CASUALS RED v MERTON FC**  
Away – AM

**U11s**  
**MERTON FC v ASHFORD TOWN COLTS**  
Home – AM

**U13s**  
**NO FIXTURE**

**U14s**  
**RAYNES PARK VALE YELLOWS v MERTON FC**  
Away – AM

**U15s**  
**MERTON FC v BROCKHAM BADGERS BLACKS**  
Home – AM



**MERTON FOOTBALL CLUB**

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