

# THE MERTON WAY



# 2016

## THE YEAR OF THE GROWTH

This is the last edition of the Merton Way for 2016 so there are a few end of year things to note.

First of all there is no need to panic because match reports and photos will be posted on our website and of course there is always Facebook, so keep writing the reports and taking pics.

The club has had a pretty successful year as we end the year with a lot more participating members than we started with and an extra adult team and a thriving youth section with five teams.

I would like to thank all those involved but especially Mike Todd and Clappers for their hard work in the adult section and Steve and McKenzie in the youth section but to all the managers and captains throughout the club. Thank you to all the helpers.

We had another cracking weekend at the Hood with some great football matches and a 'Christmas Jumpers Bar night' of epic proportions and again thanks to Matt, Natalie, Sherbs and Amanda for sterling work on one side of the bar and the rest of the club lead by Toddy and Clappers putting in an impressive shift on the other side. Great fun great jumpers and congratulations to Connor

Murphy for winning the competition and upholding the long tradition of Murphy's drinking at the Hood.

Of course, October saw the tragic death of Nick Papanastasiou who is greatly missed at the club. Because his love of life and sport was characterised in his smile we donated some money to Smile Train, a charity that funds cleft palate operations in the developing world so two little children will now be able to 'Smile for Nick'. We will also commemorate Nick in our New Year's Day Game when a Club select will play a team lead by Chris's brother and consisting of his friends. Meet at the Hood at 12pm for 1pm kick off.

Then we will be into 2017 and New Year resolutions. What could we do better as a club? We are always pleased to receive suggestions and as club members. Discipline has to be high on the list. If anyone would like to help in any capacity in running the club, a team please contact me. We need help in the bar on both sides of the counter.

**Happy Christmas and a successful new year and remember!!**

# 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. Exams are like a girlfriend – too many questions, difficult to understand and more explanation needed.  
I failed my exams :(
2. I don't have a dirty mind, I have a sexy imagination.
3. I was with my mate the other day and he said onions are the only food that makes people cry, so I threw a coconut in his face and said not only onions my friend!
4. SEX isn't the answer... YES is the answer!
5. My answer to cleaning is just putting stuff in less obvious places
6. A push up bra is like a bag of crisps, you open it and half of it's empty!
7. I walked into the bank the yesterday and told the cashier, "I'd like to open a joint account please."  
**CASHIER:** "OK, with whom?"  
**ME:** "Whoever has lots of money."
8. I want to be the reason you look down at your phone and smile... and then walk into a pole.
9. **ME:** I don't want to go to work  
**BILLS:** Bitch better have my money

**TV OF THE WEEK:**

Planet Earth II – BBC1

**SONG OF THE WEEK:**

Human – Rag'N'Bone Man

# CHRISTMAS JUMPED-UP

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**Merton FC:** the Merton Christmas Party – a time to show off a vast array of jumpers apart from two who went shopping together

# New Year fixture

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## NICK PAPANASTASIOU MEMORIAL FRIENDLY 1 JANUARY 2017

**A**s most of you will be aware by now, Merton FC lost one of its members, Nick Papanastasiou, in a tragic accident in Vietnam in October. Even though he only joined in 2015, his impact on the club was profound, and his infectious smile and endearing nature will not be forgotten in a hurry – nor his excellent footballing ability and impressive bowling action.

The club have considered various ways in which to commemorate Nick's life, and, among other things, it has been agreed with Nick's brother, Chris, that a friendly fixture will take place on New Year's Day. This will be a Merton XI against a team comprised of Chris' friends and family.

The meet time will be 12pm for a 1pm kick off at the Hood. Preference will be given to the 2s and 3s team members if they are able and keen to play. Thereafter, vacancies will be filled with players from other teams. But whether you are playing or not, it promises to be a great occasion, so please do come down. The bar will be open for the day, so it's a great way to dust off the New Year's Eve hangover (and potentially create a new one).

Most importantly, it's a wonderful way to remember a young man who was very special to Merton FC, and we are hopeful that this will be the start of an enduring tradition.

If you are keen to be involved as a player and/or supporter, please do get in touch with Max or Clappers. We hope to see as many of you there as possible.



Merton FC: celebrating the life of Nick Papanastasiou

# THE MERTON WAY

## 2016 CHRISTMAS QUIZ

### 1. WHEN THE CAPTAIN ASKS WHETHER YOU ARE AVAILABLE FOR NEXT WEEK'S CRUCIAL MATCH IN NORTH LONDON DO YOU SAY:

- (a) Sorry Skip, I am in Bristol
- (b) It's my brother/sisters/mothers/fathers /Any other relative 's / best friends.....funeral/wedding/stag do/ Hen party ???/bar mitzvah.
- (c) Ooh yes. I love a train journey across London at the weekends and the bus replacement service really adds a bit of interest.
- (d) I'll let you know Friday evening about 9pm but will confirm about midday Saturday but if I'm not there for kick off best start without me. Email me the post code tho and all the meet details! Is it Saturday or Sunday?
- (e) I'm in skip as long as i can get the plaster off this broken ankle by Wednesday midday I should be fine for at least the bench.

### 2. WHAT IS THE BEST TREATMENT FOR THE KIT AFTER THE MATCH?

- (a) Stuff it in the kit bag totally unsorted with as many extraneous items as you can find (Eg water bottles footballs old bananas) and Lock it in the store and let it ferment till someone discovers it and tries to play in it?
- (b) Take it to the Kimbers leave it on doorstep and run.
- (c) Take kit home soak it to remove inground stains, wash, dry and fold lovingly. (worry about whether it would be better if you had ironed it)
- (d) Let each player take his kit home and lose it. Specially effective at the end of the season and almost always ensures a new kit next season.

### 3. ONE OF OUR MEMBERS 'LEFT' AT THE START OF THE SEASON AND JOINED ONE OF OUR LOCAL RIVALS. WHAT WAS THE EFFECT OF THIS?

- (a) Our bar takings fell significantly.
- (b) Club arrears fell significantly
- (c) Club disciplinary record improved significantly.
- (d) Average IQ increased at both clubs.
- (e) All of the above.

### 4. YOU'VE JUST CONCEDED A FREE KICK FOR AN UGLY LUNGE AT THE OPPOSITION FORWARD 5 YARDS OUTSIDE OUR BOX. WHAT DO YOU NEXT?

- (a) Retreat respectfully 10 yards with head bowed and organise the defence fully alert and listening carefully to the keeper's instructions about the wall .
- (b) Sit on the ball on the spot and consult your Merton disciplinary code to see if you tell the ref what you think of his decision you will miss the away fixture at Crouch End or the one at Bank of England.
- (c) Complain vociferously and protractedly about the decision enlisting the support of and thus distracting all your team mates from the job in hand and making a goal even more likely.
- (d) Have a tantrum and get subbed (or b c and d in that order)

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### 5. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING DO YOU THINK IS CHEATING?

- (a) Carrying on playing when you know the ball has gone out of play.
  - (b) Shouting 'He's off' at the ref when you know he isn't.
  - (c) Pretending that you have been tripped and diving.
  - (d) Pretending the ball hasn't crossed the line for a goal.
  - (e) Wearing the wrong colour tape on your socks.
- (Ed – It's OK It does not matter but they are all unacceptable at Merton).

### 6. WHAT IS YOUR RESPONSE WHEN YOUR CAPTAIN ASKS YOU TO WRITE THE MATCH REPORT?

- (a) A report, recording it all I have been trying to forget about it.
- (b) Well it would be a bit embarrassing I was obviously Man of the Match, Set up all our chances and nearly stopped most of their goals.
- (c) Do we have reports? Whats that for?
- (d) Nah I've tweeted it.
- (e) Since I got clattered I cant recall too much to be honest. What was the score?
- (f) I was always taught if you cant say something nice don't say anything at all. "I say Nothing"

### 7. WHEN IT COMES TO PUTTING THE DIRTY KIT INTO THE WASHING BAG WHAT IS BEST TO DO WITH VERY MUDDY SOCKS THAT YOU HAVE WALKED BACK IN FROM THE FARTHEST PITCH WITH YOUR BOOTS OFF?

- (a) Stretch them out shaking/scraping off any extraneous mud and placing them singly into the dirty wash bag with all the shirts and shorts that have been placed there in the same way.
- (b) Scrape them up from the floor in the way they have been removed from the foot but inside out and tie them together in a tight knot.
- (c) Well after cleaning my boots with them I am not quite sure what happens to them

### 8. WHILST ON THE SUBJECT OF SOCKS DO YOU KNOW WHERE SOCK TAPE COMES FROM?

- (a) It starts off on a Saturday morning about half an hour before kick off in the kit bag and then somehow half an hour after the match it is in my kit bag. Simple Magic.
- (b) No idea it is one of those wonderful things that the Kit fairy does but there it and it's the right colour.
- (c) They sell it shops like Maplin and Band Q. (You are kidding me)

### 9) AFTER THE MATCH YOU SHOULD CLEAN YOUR BOOTS BUT WHERE?

- (a) In the shower!!
- (b) With the hosepipe/bucket outside!
- (c) I didn't know there was a hosepipe/bucket (there will be one).
- (d) I didn't know there was a shower
- (e) I scored a hat-trick so I am not washing this magic off.

### 10) HAVING ATTENDED TO YOUR ABLUTIONS SHOULD YOU.....

- (a) Dive off to the bar immediately to buy the referee/teammates/opposition a drink and engage them in lively and edifying conversation delighting in their goalscoring prowess.
- (b) When the manager asks about the next weekend you keep your availability for next week a closely guarded secret till you know where the game is.
- (c) Pay your match fee/arrears and fines and tell him you are available for CEV or anywhere within 3hrs travelling.
- (d) Immediately disappear with the old 'off to find a cash machine' excuse not to be seen till next week.

# 1s

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## MERTON FC 4 ALEXANDRA PARK 1

A slow start to the day, as we sat in the changing room for 15 minutes waiting for a key to arrive. Not ideal, but worthy of DOTD?

With a strong wind and low sun this was an ideal toss to win. Which, of course, I didn't. Not ideal, but worthy of DOTD?

Kicking into the aforementioned wind we defended well and go the ball forward early, as Ally Pally were playing a very high line. One such attack sent Jonny through. Jonny's running style doesn't scream speed but he leapt, pranced and bounded away from his man, who in turn pulled him back. Penalty! A definite pen but not all refs would've given it. This ref did.

Woody stepped up. 1-0.

Despite the elements we had the better of the half and looked comfortable yet still found ourselves 1-1 at half-time.

A break down their right saw a bobbled cross sent in. Browner (Brauner for the newer members) lifted his leg to clear and the ball duly went under it and the AP centre forward dispatched it. Browner let out a very long and low "Oh no" and then berated himself under his breath for the rest of the half.

We started the second half with the wind and a lot of purpose and very quickly took control of the game. An under hit corner from James was played back to him and his delightful curling cross was headed home by Jonny. 2-1 and looking good.

Then came a key moment in the game. Boshier chased down a through ball and as their keeper gathered the ball on the edge of his box he stepped just outside his box. A definite handball but not all refs would've given. This ref did. It wasn't finished yet though, as the ref then sent the keeper off. Certainly not all refs would've done that. This ref did. Having hit the bar earlier in the half, from a similar position, this time Woody



**Merton 1s:** life in a first team changing room is as depressing as it looks; Clappers orchestrates the mannequin challenge and then explains how he stole his Christmas jumper from TK Maxx

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smashed it in. 3-1 and see MFC Facebook for video evidence. Much discussion, both on and off the pitch, as to whether it should've been a red card and if the freekick was direct or not. Which shows none of us know the rules and therefore shouldn't berate refs.

With 10 men and an outfield player in goal AP were never going to get back into the game and we duly scored a fourth with a break down our left, a ball across, and a rebound of Charlie. 4-1 and game over.

### **OTHER NOTABLE POINTS FROM THE DAY:**

- Everyone's concern for Tilley's well being as he jogged around nowhere near his man for most of the game. Sore back? Or Xmas do on Friday night?
- Two moments of praise, yes you heard it, praise for me from Siri.
- James Laughton finding out Santa doesn't exist. Sorry James (sad emoji)
- Chaz turning up for the Xmas party. Necking a number of quick drinks and then going missing in action.
- Ivan coming to the party for a couple of hours. A good effort from Merton's self proclaimed "Massive Lad" when it was clear he wasn't really allowed to be out.
- Will Low sleeping under a towel.

**STARTING LINE-UP:** Siri, Rat, Browner/Brauner, Clappers, Will Low, James L, Woody, Tilley, Boshier, Jonny, Charlie.

**SUB:** Milo

**MAN OF THE MATCH:** Woody (Clappers a close second)

**DICK OF THE DAY:** Clappers (harsh)

# 2s

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## MERTON FC 2 HSBC 3

A beautiful, crisp day, a wonderfully green, flat pitch and a dog faster than (or at least as fast as) a train (spotted only by Rayner who relayed the message to the rest of the group) greeted Merton 2s in South East London last Saturday. Ian Lewis was sat in the dugout, watching on and looking more managerial than ever having purchased Ron Atkinson's sheepskin coat at auction earlier this week. His regular support and words of encouragement are very much appreciated.

Merton were quicker out of the blocks and took the lead after 20 minutes. Some great work by Willgo, Alex and Joe (and possibly more) down the right led to the ball being crossed low to Dan Kelly 10 yards out who took a touch and rifled into the bottom corner. As is often the way, Merton then relaxed and HSBC scored two quick goals before half-time. One because a chasm suddenly appeared in the Merton defence and another due to a good switch of play by HSBC and a very nice finish.

The second half started evenly until, on the hour mark, HSBC scored an extremely fortunate pinball style goal. Shortly after this Cookie decided to turn up the heat and it all got a little hairy...

He was on one of his ill-advised dribbles around his own penalty area. Impressively keeping the ball but encouraging some optimistic attempts from HSBC players to snaffle it off him. One player in particular, who we'll call Brian, took one too many scrapes at the back of Cookie's legs and so Cookie fronted him up and pulled Brian's hair. Brian attempted to pull Cookie's hair in return before realising that he may have been scratched by Cookie in the kerfuffle. With Brian in shock about the scratch and on the verge of tears in the ongoing argument, Brian's girlfriend mistakenly thought she would try and save him from more embarrassment by charging onto the pitch to protect him. Unfortunately someone shouted out "who let their dog on the pitch?" which we all thought was very rude and simply not funny.

The referee asked both Cookie and Brian to vacate the pitch by raising his red card which he did, as he did everything, very slowly. Cookie marched off to the changing room, got changed and went straight to Infernos. Brian went on to complain about an invisible scratch for the next half hour – this was extremely annoying if you were playing on the same side of the pitch that him and his girlfriend were standing.

The referee probably should have called up for a foul long before this incident got to where it did although, at the time of going to print, the referee has not issued a public apology for his behaviour and that is absolutely understandable.

With both sides down to 10, Merton pulled a goal back through a Rayner corner, DQ head and (unconfirmed) Joe flick but it wasn't enough.

Good performances from many Merton players this week. Willgo and Andy Ross controlled the middle for large periods of the game. The back four, apart from two moments where they all went for a coffee while HSBC mounted an attack, were again very assured. Our five or six regular defenders are considerably more comfortable on the ball than any of the other defences in this division and we need to leverage this more by playing across the pitch and intelligently out from the back.

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Pearcey, Alex and Conor all had very good games but it was Conor who took home (or drank) the MOTM trophy. He was calm and assured at the back and showed great energy on the overlap when charging past the ageing, but still handsome, Rayner.

Special mention goes to Jason Thomas who completed his move back from centre forward, through central midfield and defence and is now a goalkeeper (he also came to the game almost directly from one of London's airports after a 20+ hour trip back from the land down under). Both Sherbs and Jason himself should be worried about team and position selection next week after a great performance.

Dick of the Day? Well it turns out that for some people the sighting of a super-dog just doesn't make the headlines. Fortunately, Cookie will also be meeting the Predator on his return to action in 2017. We all look forward to that.

# 3s

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## MERTON 2 OLD WILSONIANS 3

This Saturday's game was led by minute of silence to commemorate the members of Chapecoense FC, who died in a horrific air crash a week ago. Both teams showed their respects before kick off.

With the usual 3s formation (4-5-1), Merton started the match well, pushing for goals with the super fast wingers Glen and Emanuel and not that fast Denys up top. It did work out quite well as a lot of chances were created and lots of ball possession for the home team. And first shot on goal came from Darcy but that wasn't that dangerous for opposition goalkeeper, few chances for young Emanuel went nowhere as well. Under such a pressure from Merton, we didn't have to wait long, as Darcy picked the ball from a rebound and hammered it into the top corner, 1-0. Worth saying that our defence with Ben and Alberto was doing well, controlling the game; one of their clearances were picked up by Mustard, who dribbled the ball on the left side up to the oppo goals and only the bar saved them from the 2nd goal.

After the break Merton were looking for a much needed 2nd goal and as a result of constant attacking Neil's cross was headed by a Wilsonians defender into their own net, 2-0. Having scored 2 goals Merton relaxed a bit and it cost them. The oppo keeper cleared the ball and it was picked up by their left midfielder who made his way towards the Merton goal and coolly lobbed Darren (goalkeeper), 2-1. With being 2-1 up Merton missed a couple of good chances for the 3rd goal, the best one from Denys, tried to lob the keeper but didn't hit the ball properly, as a result, a throw in for Wilsonians and DOM.

Wilsonians increased their tempo and pressure over Merton and one of their free kicks ended up with a cross to the box where one of the oppo players headed a ball into the net, 2-2.

Nobody wanted to draw or lose the game, as both teams started counter attacking football. The luck was on Wilsonians side, once again a set piece, crossed into our box and goal, 2-3.

Sad but true, another loss for 3's, onwards and upwards though.

**STARTING LINE-UP:** Darren, Alberto, Ben, Mustard, Dan, Neil, Darcy, Ian, Glen, Emanuel, Denys, Jordan, Alex

**MAN OF THE MATCH:** Dan, Ian, Neil

**DICK OF THE DAY:** Denys

# 4s

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## MERTON FC 1 CARSHALTON 3

Carshalton. A game where the only guarantees are niggles and bad blood. But for the 4s, who'd come off the back of a number of narrow defeats, it looked a tough assignment against second from top of the league - especially with a depleted squad. No Dan Gridley or Joe Plumridge, and Sonny went into the game carrying a significant injury.

Nevertheless, the game got underway, and Merton perhaps surprised themselves at how comfortable they were. Not only was their shape rock solid, giving Carshalton short shrift in attack, but the Yellows were passing it around on the deck. Despite being into a noticeable breeze, they arguably had the best of things.

Central to it all was Will, who was immense, and won just about every challenge - both in the air and on the floor. Ryan, too, was an absolute rock at right back. But further up the pitch, Gubby and Mike Vogt were providing good outlets for attack, and Dom was getting ball to feet. The moment critique came around midway through the half, as Dom forced the keeper (aka utter mentalist) into an incredible reflex save.

In fairness, Carshalton had a couple of chances too, with Kieran making a fine one-on-one save with their striker, while Chris made a great clearance off the line to thwart another goal-bound shout. But the hosts were by no means bossing things, which is what made the opening goal all the more disappointing to concede.

For once, Will wasn't quite able to clear his lines with a header, and the wind cruelly brought the ball back towards the danger area. A bit of a scramble ensued, but the goal itself was technically offside, as the man who tapped in the ball that was squared to him had only Chris in front of him, with Kieran a few yards off his line. But despite the protests, the goal stood, and it was 1-0 to Carshalton.

In truth, the goal rocked Merton somewhat, and they were under the cosh in the last five minutes of the half. But they just about hung on, and with the wind at their backs for the second period, they fancied their chances. The difficulty was that Sonny had already hobbled off, while Mike Vogt had picked up an injury too. That left the Yellows with the bare 11, and that soon became 10 as Frankie was forced off with a toe injury.

Still, Merton gamely battled on, and stayed right in the contest. The flashpoint came about 15 minutes into the half as Dom, who was causing their defence all sorts of problems, was bitten in the face by their disgraceful goalkeeper after chasing a ball down. Suarez-esque, and absolutely extraordinary. The keeper didn't even deny it during the inquest that followed, but the referee hadn't seen it, and thus couldn't give it.

Unfortunately, the hammer blow came soon after, as the home side managed to get a bit of an overlap on the outskirts of the Merton penalty area, and somehow eked out a low shot which nestled in the bottom left corner of the net. 2-0, and it now looked a long way back.

Frankie had managed to get himself back on the park, but he wasn't fully fit. Carl too, was also struggling, and with John Gridley still in the latter stages of his recovery from a calf problem, the 4s effectively only had eight players at 100%. Yet still they continued to show remarkable fight, and even managed to carve out some very decent attacks.

But the nail in the coffin came with about 10 minutes to go, as their striker made a good run down the right,

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and fired an absolute tracer bullet from a tight angle, which went in off the under side of the bar. It really was a thumping, unstoppable effort, and a deflated Merton outfit were now 3-0 down.

They gave it their all for the last few, determined not to let the scoreboard spiral out of control, and unjustly reflect on what was actually a good performance. Chris, who himself had been superb at centre back, took a brutal knock for his efforts, as their striker sent a high boot flush onto his nose. The subsequent blood and bruise was a fairly apt way to sum up Merton's day.

But the reward for their continued endeavour came at the death. They won a corner, which Frankie expertly drifted into the box. The excellent Will rose highest, and hammered home his header to make it 3-1. A fine finish indeed.

The whistle went soon after, and the warrior 4s just about hobbled off the park with their heads held high. Perhaps it can get tiresome to consistently commend losing performances. But the biggest possible compliment and vindication came later in the change rooms, as the Carshalton captain said that it was the toughest game they had had all season, and that he was astonished that we were second from bottom.

Says all you need to know. Now to turn that into three points against fellow bottom dwellers Lloyds Warren next week.

**STARTING LINE-UP:** Kieran Lee (GK), Ed Plaistow, Mike Todt, Chris Outred, Ryan Burchell, Will Harrison, Michael Gubby, Michael Vogt, Sonny Kennedy, Frankie Kaligorou, Dom Plumridge

**SUBS:** Carl Kewley, John Gridley

**GOAL:** Will Harrison

**MAN OF THE MATCH:** Will Harrison (special mention to Ryan Burchell for a great game too)

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

# 5s

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## MERTON FC 2 CIVIL SERVICE 2

**T**he concept of a game south of the river has become a foreign concept to the 5s as we travelled a short distance away to “uncharted” territories. “Uncharted” in this instance has a very ironic meaning, as we’ve been in Chiswick so much this season, that there have been rumours of Merton council looking to expand their boundaries across the river.

This week saw a different line-up from most weeks as we enter the festive season. Our reliant leader, Clive, filled in as a nostalgic left back while a rare partnering of Anam and Ackers in the centre of midfield. Up top we had familiar Pete who was making a return of sorts having previously played for Civil Service many moons ago, while Dulanje provided support behind. The game started rather poignantly with a moments silence was held due to the tragic news received in South America. The game kicked off and it seemed that a few Merton legs were less than receptive than usual, perhaps due to the cold weather as Civil looked to exploit our sluggish start. While they drove forward not many chances were created in the first 15 minutes. We began to become more involved in the game with good possession and build up play, but the initial sharpness in the attack was still rather blunt. Half an hour had been played when Merton looked to break on the counter from a corner. The ball fell to Dulanje on the left wing, with Clive bursting forward to his right looking to receive a pass to propel the momentum further. Unfortunately trying to take on a player instead saw the ball pinched from Dulanje’s toe, leaving a big hole behind which was exploited in numbers as Civil had yet to register the break meaning many players were still forward. Goal. One-up to the home team. Not the usual Merton start. A few more attempts were brilliantly dealt with, as the opposition’s centre forward proved a handful for our centre backs. Half Time.

A brief talk from our manager highlighted where we were going wrong and the boys came out looking to get back into the game. Down the left hand side Dwayne superbly provided cover as the Chiswick team looked to bombard with pace. 10 minutes into the second half, we brought on Noor for Darren Avey, as Clive stepped into central defence, Dwayne filled in at left back and the fresh legs playing in front. This seemed to tighten the back line, as it allowed Dwayne to provide more pace on the flank, while Clive could organise positions. A Civil attack saw Clive slide in strongly to stop the ball and play forward to Anam who then brilliantly saw space down the right flank for Dulanje. Our ever present attacker broke down the wing and played a ball across goal to Noor, who laid the ball for Aaron B to shoot. Deflection! The ball bobbed past the keeper looking to go clear, when Pete charged in at the back post and slotted home. 1-1. The home team looked around and collected themselves as they looked to get back into the game. This half however Merton had stepped up to play at their usual standard. More chances were made both ends, but the next goal came rather controversially. The home team looked to break down our right flank and whipped a ball in which was easily caught by Sam. As the ball was caught, our ‘keeper was bundled by an oncoming runner (who could not stop in fairness, momentum taking over). The ball was dropped and the ball rolled in. Normally play would be stopped and a foul would be given – not today. Without looking to condemn the referee, this was

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against the improvements we imposed during the half, with the match official later admitting he made the wrong decision. A few cries of encouragement saw Merton come back, not looking disheartened as the team of last season would have been. The away team pushed and pushed looking to pull back another equaliser, with Pete coming very close with a one-on-one which the on-rushing keeper brilliantly saved. It looked like despite our efforts, the goal was not going to come. Anam's passing continued to be a threat with Aaron B making many dangerous runs creating space. Last two minutes of the game and the equaliser had still not come. The ball fell to Pete on the far edge of the right hand side of the box, he beat a player, looked up to set the ball and placed it across goal into the net. Back in the game, but not enough time for the winner.

**TEAM:** Sam, Delman, Steve B, Darren, Clive, Aaron B, Aaron Ackerman, Anam, Dwayne, Dulanje, Pete

**SUB:** Noor

**MAN OF THE MATCH:** Pete for his two goals, which very well could have been a hat-trick! Anam and Dwayne weren't too far behind but I think the importance of Pete's goals proved he just scraped the decision.

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

# 6s

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**MERTON FC 6s 8**

**MERTON FC 7s 6**

**S**aturday brought together the two lowest team's in the club for a friendly instead of the scheduled league fixture due to many players rather doing their Christmas shopping run around then to play in a match billed bigger and more hostile than the El Clasico that was due to be kicking off a couple hours of later.

With uncertainty as to who was turning up at 1pm, the numbers were soon going down quicker than Kevin's kebab on a Friday night! With breaking news coming through that Dylan was throwing up everything inside of him by the side of the road in Tooting, but with John eagerly to get his boots on again... the obvious thing to do was to put Dylan in a cab back home and speedily drive to the Hood!

After a minute's silence for the tragic plane crash in Columbia, the 6s started the first half with a 3-4-1 formation and after a scrappy first 15 minutes started to get a foothold of the game and started to create chances.

I will be quite honest here, I cannot remember who took the lead and who all the goalscorers were, so this won't be an Evening Standard match write up. What I do know though is that, Callum who has been a consistent performer for the 6s this season opted to win the award for miss of the season. A cut back from the right to Callum to side foot into an empty net from 5 yards out was calmly steered over the bar and onto the 1s pitch!

Another note of a match of very clear missed chances, was a strong claim for own goal of the season. With the ball played out to Ram in the left back spot, he played it across, but note: back to Chappell's stronger left foot and away from the pressing forward, who in turn passed it back to Matt Haswell in goal, so far so good. What followed would have had Kevin spewing blood and the rest of the team on the floor crying. Picture this, it was like taking control of your goalie on FIFA – panicking as the ball is coming in your direction and then running back to your own goal not realising the ball is by your feet and putting the ball in the back of the net... that is exactly what happened!!

All in all, it was a good run out to keep everyone fit and match sharp especially for John who kindly did his impersonation of a worm, while one-on-one with the Martin in goal to show us why he's memorable, I mean invaluable member of the squad : )

With both squads looking strong and with good starts to the league campaign, the much anticipated league game will be a close fought contest.

**STARTING LINE-UP:** Matt (GK), Tom, Mark C, Ram, George B, Jamie, Dave, Callum, Jon

**MAN OF THE MATCH:** I will give it to Jamie, used the ball intelligently and spread the play well with calm assurance.

**DICK OF THE DAY:** A close call between Callum for that miss and Matt for running with the ball into his own goal. I will have to give it to Callum this week as I think he won't be getting too many votes every week unlike Matt!

# RICHARD GIBBS



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

Outside the club I work as a Finance Manager for BT Openreach. I think I come across initially to people as someone quite intimidating (probably due to the Gibbs frown!) and it's probably why people often can't tell when I'm taking the piss! In my spare time I try and play as much sport as I can (Football, Skiing, Tennis, FIFA) and I love to travel!

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

Mike Stone invited me to come along one day when I was looking for a club to join – never looked back since despite it being a 1 hour commute – great group of lads!

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

Scoring a hattrick on my debut for the 5s – I then had to watch them lose 6-4 despite being 4-1 up after 20 minutes, having to come off due to an injury by sliding into the goalpost to get my third!

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

Borussia Dortmund – I couldn't imagine anything better than playing in front of the infamous Yellow Wall!

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

Join in the general banter of the team ripping one another to shreds until we go out and do the business on the pitch (we all like each other really!)

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

It started of being to beat Dulanje's total and retain the golden boot, however finding myself playing a much more of a defensive role and having 0 goals to date has meant a revised goal of getting at least 1 and helping the 5s win the league!

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**Player of the season (so far):** Dwayne Bedford – Dwayne's come a long way since last season and puts a huge shift in every game – he's also learnt to head the ball – well kind of!

**Childhood Team:** Arsenal

**Favourite team in the UK:** Arsenal

**Favourite team outside the UK:** Borussia Dortmund

**Childhood Hero:** SuperTed

**Favourite Food:** difficult one – probably a Ribs & Wings combo!

**Favourite Drink:** Vino – red all the way

**Favourite Band/Artist:** Guns N's Roses

# RAPID FIRE

# U9s

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## **MERTON FC 4 CORINTHIAN CASUALS 6**

**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 4**

**ASHFORD TOWN COLTS 0**

**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 5**  
**TOOTING & MITCHAM 4**

**NO MATCH REPORT SUBMITTED**

# U14s

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**MERTON FC 3**

**RAYNES PARK VALE YELLOWS 1**

**NO MATCH REPORT SUBMITTED**

# U15s

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## **MERTON FC 1**

## **BROCKHAM BADGERS BLACKS 0**

A hard fought win, which was justly deserved was finally delivered by the team. The hard work of the past few weeks was clear to be seen throughout this game. Training sessions recently had been based on keeping the ball, and our shape without the ball. This was evident throughout the game.

A change of formation took a while to get used to the positions and the roles within the team. The first 20 minutes were all Brockham, however they did not create many opportunities to score. It took us a while to find our feet in the game - and when we did we began to dominate the ball and the game. High pressure off the ball, and good movement when on the ball meant that we created chance after chance in the remaining 20 minutes in the first half.

Towards the end of the first half we were lining up to score, but couldn't find the finishing touch that would have increased our confidence.

We started the second half on the front foot, continuing off from where we left off in the first half. We continued to move the ball well and create chances.

Our game came out of nothing, a long range effort from Harrison and it was spilt by the keeper over the line. Great goal, and one that boosted the confidence.

On the ball, we took our foot off the pedal. But defensively we kept our shape and defended well as a unit. It was great to see the boys win the game. On to the next one. Well done!

# WHO'S WHERE AND WHEN

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## SATURDAY 10 DECEMBER 2016

**1s**  
**ACTONIANS ASSOCIATION v MERTON FC**  
Old Actonians Sports Club – 14:00

**2s**  
**LLOYDS WARREN v MERTON FC**  
Club Langley – 14:00

**3s**  
**MERTON FC v CIVIL SERVICE**  
Joseph Hood Recreation Ground – 14:00

**4s**  
**MERTON FC v LLOYDS WARREN**  
King George's Playing Field – 13:00

**5s**  
**MERTON FC v ACTONIANS ASSOCIATION**  
Joseph Hood Recreation Ground – 13:30

**6s**  
**MERTON FC v OLD PARMITERIANS**  
Joseph Hood Recreation Ground – 13:30

**7s**  
**SOUTH BANK CUACO v MERTON FC**  
Dulwich Sports Ground – 14:00

## SUNDAY 11 DECEMBER 2016

**U9s**  
**MERTON FC v CB HOUNSLOW UTD GREEN**  
Home – AM

**U11s**  
**MERTON FC v HANSWORTH SPORTS HORNETS**  
Home – AM

**U13s**  
**MERTON FC v G4G FC BLUES**  
Home – AM

**U14s**  
**MERTON FC v TOOTING & MITCHAM COLTS**  
Home – AM

**U15s**  
**CROYGAS LIONS v MERTON FC**  
Away – AM

**MERTON FOOTBALL CLUB**

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