

THE MERTON WAY



RAM'S HANGING UP

After three years as our designer in chief and editor of the Merton Way, we're sad to announce that Ram Mahbubani will no longer be putting together your weekly reading fix due to new work commitments. On behalf of the whole club, we thank Ram for the excellent job he has done.

But to keep the Merton Way going, this vacancy needs to be filled! Are you someone who has a handle on design? Keen to get more involved with the club, and perform a job which gives hundreds (if not thousands) of readers weekly joy? Then we're calling on you to step up to the plate....

Ram is on hand to help whoever takes over to ensure a smooth transition and continue the work that's already gone into it. He points out that the software he uses is called Adobe InDesign, and he has all the pages templated.

So it should be a doddle for whoever takes over, albeit that you will need to know how to use the software. Alternatively, you'd be free to start your own style newsletter in a software you are knowledgeable with. The canvas is yours to do with as you please!

So go on lads, your club needs you – the time is now to step up, embed yourself into Merton folklore forever, and **BECOME THE NEW MERTON WAY EDITOR!!!**



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.

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!!

SUPER BOWL LI MAYHEM AT THE HOOD

A different kind of football comes to the Hood on Sunday 5th February - the American kind! Join us at Merton FC's fortress pavilion for a splendid evening filled with darts, Remember the Titans, Any Given Sunday, Cool Runnings, a large amount of drinking, and a sumptuous full Texan BBQ spread. Oh, and some Super Bowl action too.

Many hardcore football fans will be there until the not-so-early hours of the Monday morning, but feel free to come and go as you please. The festivities will get underway at around 18:30, with food being served in the early evening. On the menu is Brisket, Pork shoulder, Short ribs, Chicken wings and a host of delicious sides.

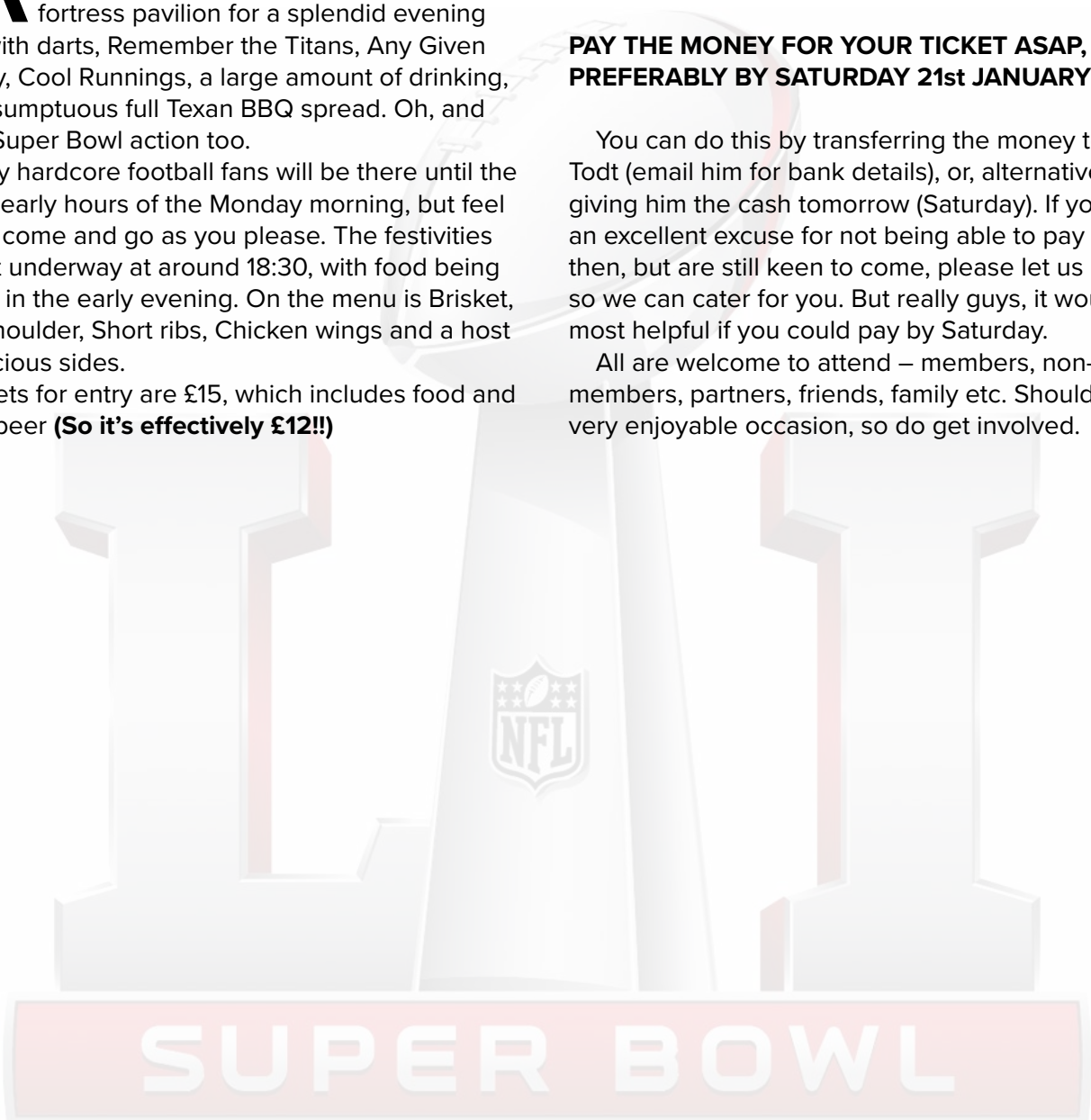
Tickets for entry are £15, which includes food and a free beer **(So it's effectively £12!!)**

However, to reserve your spot, and to help us with catering in terms of numbers, we need you to please:

PAY THE MONEY FOR YOUR TICKET ASAP, PREFERABLY BY SATURDAY 21st JANUARY!!!

You can do this by transferring the money to Mike Todt (email him for bank details), or, alternatively, by giving him the cash tomorrow (Saturday). If you have an excellent excuse for not being able to pay by then, but are still keen to come, please let us know so we can cater for you. But really guys, it would be most helpful if you could pay by Saturday.

All are welcome to attend – members, non-members, partners, friends, family etc. Should be a very enjoyable occasion, so do get involved.



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. I didn't think there was anything wrong with my online dating profile until my girlfriend said I obviously lied. My profile said 'I'm outstanding in my field, looking for something stable and hung like a donkey', she wasn't expecting an ass to turn up!
2. To make it stand, you wet it. To make it wet, you suck it. To make it stiff, you lick it. To get it in, you push it! Damn... threading a needle at any age is no joke!
3. Women don't dress for men, they dress for themselves. If they dressed for men then they'd be walking around naked all the time.
4. My boss asked me to start the presentation to the MD with a joke, so I attached my payslip to the first slide.
5. If you ever find yourself in a situation where I am the "voice of reason" then we are in a very bad situation.
6. I really think that tossing and turning at night should be considered as exercise!
7. Sometimes you have to unfollow people in real life.
8. Wait, let me grab you some tissue, your bullshit is leaking out the sides of your mouth.
9. When someone says to me great minds think alike, I just look at them and think 'you dirty bastard'.

TV OF THE WEEK:

Apple Tree Yard – BBC1

SONG OF THE WEEK:

You Don't Know Me – Jax Jones & Raye

1s

MERTON FC 1 OLD THORNTONIANS 2

We turned up for this cup quarter final full of optimism. We were on the back of a good run of results and had a strong squad. Sadly it wasn't our day.

The pitches were in very good condition but the frost made them very hard and probably only just about playable. As the cliché goes "The same for both sides" and certainly this wasn't the reason we lost.

We started well and put Old Ts under a lot of pressure resulting in a series of corners. Woody was sending in some good deliveries and eventually one was shouldered home by Chaz. We continued to flow forward and one particularly good move saw a great cross from Van that Jonny just couldn't get on the end of. 2-0 with our backs up could of seen us run away with the tie but equally we could of easily prevented their two goals.

A poor clearance was followed by some poor tracking and then finished off with a poor tackle. A poor team effort. This left their, very unpleasant, left winger free to send in his cross. Unfortunately his cross turned into a fluke that sailed into the far top corner. A few minutes later and we were 2-1 down. A long throw was flicked on to their centre forward who had the freedom of the six yard box and he smashed home.

Then came a mad few minutes. Some handbags escalated from nothing into two people being sent off for punches in a matter of minutes. Both reds were entirely justified but out of keeping with the rest of the game. Once everyone had calmed down, their manager and bar man had left the pitch, the last five minutes of the half were played out with no further incident.

The second half consisted of us applying lots of pressure, but perhaps without too much invention, and Old Ts defended it very well. Despite our pressure we couldn't find the equaliser and the game ended 2-1.

The result was compounded by the aforementioned very unpleasant left winger, who was their man to see red, spending the second half stood on the sideline abusing our players and offering to "smash in" anyone who answered back. An unnessecary embarrassment for Old Ts who other than him were a well organised, fair and hospitable club.

The poor result coupled with the red cards made for a pretty depressing afternoon which isn't what we look forward to all week.

Onwards and upwards.

STARTING LINE-UP: Siri, Kearnsy (TR 70), Chaz, Clappers, Rat, Sam, Woody (Tills 80), Tills (Jonny 60), Jonny (Browner 45), Bosh, Van

SUB: Tills, Jonny, Browner

2s

MERTON FC 2 LLOYDS WARREN 1

I was trying to find out what the ballyhoo Lloyds Warren stood for exactly and, aside from a bunch of pages dedicated to amateur football scores, the main results seemed to concern opinions as to why the not un-rich octegenarian Warren Buffet should buy Lloyds Banking Group. It's because, apparently, the bank with the horse is very much the UK version of Wells Fargo. I bring this up because:

A) I well like the movie Fargo

B) We had to go well far to play Lloyds Warren in the first of a double-header separated only by over a month, Christmas, New Year, two football matches (one cancelled), and the general downfall of western civilisation.

Still, unbeknownst of our fate we ploughed on to Beckenham for the first fixture, this time mercifully without Chris Rayner chirping about how some dogs can run as fast as trains. The squad, what with it being December and the Herbert working season, was shorn of quite a few of its talents. Willgoss, for example, was combing his ginger mane; Cookie was retired/suspended/still in Infernos; Dan Kelly was recreating Apocalypse Now; and Ryan Noble-Gresty was trying to fix his ankle using sticky-back plastic, Smash, and cheese strings. He didn't make the second fixture either so we can only assume he failed.

Anywho, we had a great match didn't we? All blood, sweat, and the aging gears of Jason Thomas pounding the ground up-front like Paul Pearce pounds the ladies in Magaluf: a lot of effort, a red face, quite a bit of tutting before eventually scoring largely due to the ineptitude of someone else.

In this case, that someone else was DQ, dummying missing the ball at the near post after some excellent work by Glenn down the right. Glenn, of course, is less than half big Jase's age, and almost exactly four times younger than the combined age of the front two. The JT/DQ partnership created a geriatric record bettered only in the second match against Lloyds Warren by Merton Reserves' very own Statler and Waldorf playing up top again.

It was a tough old win in fairness, the 1-0 victory courtesy of some stoic defending and the combative midfield presence of Big Dave Scott and Slightly Smaller Mike Stone. We left with our heads, and Conor Murphy's magnificent facial hair, held high.

And then we waited. Hours passed into days and long nights. Winter came and bit the soil. Dan Kelly returned from south east Asia. There he'd watched a snail crawl along the edge of a straight razor. He said it was his dream, his nightmare: crawling, slithering along the edge of a straight razor. Then he remembered that 'Nam was years ago, pulled himself together and dug his heel into Merton's turf.

'How's the ice, Dan, gone yet?'

'I love the smell of Deep Heat in the morning. Smells like victory.'

'Yes, but is the pitch playable?'

'Some day this war's gonna end.'

'I'll just ask the ref.'

The ref, diminutive but excellent, responded in the affirmative and despite the efforts of Jack Frost and the

7 | MATCH REPORT

protestations of the whinny git of a manager that seemed to accompany Lloyds Warren this time around, a match was afoot.

It was a pretty stupid match for at least the first ten minutes. 22 grown men prancing around literally like Bambi on ice struggling for grip.

Struggling for a different kind of grip altogether was Lloyds' manager, suggesting that slide tackles should not be allowed, making about 37 first-half substitutions, and regularly annoying his captain through the spouting of general nonsense. None of this prevented Lloyds Warren from taking the lead, largely due to a defensive snafu which we'll politely just blame on the pitch.

The pitch got better, and so did Merton. Alan Clowes, manager for the day and eventual man of the match, organising a solid old Conor/Clowes/Pearce/Alex back four that spent the remaining 80 minutes repelling attacks with such ease it almost suggested the opposition wasn't very good.

But they were good, Merton Reserves were simply better, equalising before half time with Big Jase slotting home following a through-ball from DQ. Quainton had received the ball from none other than Christopher Rayner, who took his mind off swift canines for long enough to provide a spiffy old corner in the second half which Andrew Holder Ross gleefully headed shouldered home. 2-1. Perhaps it should've been more, because plenty of opportunities slipped by, none more notable than Ez, arriving later than his fixture availability messages, but sadly missing the ball altogether.

By the end things were starting to get chilly again and Ez was complaining that his toes were getting ever-so-cold, so the ref's final whistle was welcome. As were the three points. Six points I mean. Six delicious points against Lloyds Warren Buffet, such is my understanding. Now that's a return you can bank on. Avoid cliches like the plague, that's what my Mum always said.

3s

MERTON 2 OLD FINCHLEIANS 4

Groundhog Day. Quite a good film, one of Bill Murrays best if you ask me. Funny, but a serious message about valuing what you have that I'm sure we could all learn from. But alas, this isn't a film review and it appears if you take the idea of a day repeating itself and apply it to a 3s game, things don't tend to go so well...

The 3s turned up at our alternative home ready to go and pumped to right some wrongs from the past few weeks.

The first GD moment was Gubby turning up ready to make his second appearance for the 3s, a sight met with some trepidation after his double debut of MOM and DOTD.

After an intense warm-up focused on finding a pitch that wasn't 80% frozen so as not to break any ankles, we found a pitch that was 65% frozen and we kicked off against opponents that we lost by the odd goal too last time and that we had deduced from that game weren't a very nice bunch (GD moment 2 to watch out for).

After 10 minutes of not a lot of action and the striker for the opposition making some dangerous runs he was set through 1 on 1 and slotted in to the top corner to put the boars 1 down.

This seemed to give the boars a kick they needed and they started to come in to the game with Mustard and Neal controlling the middle and Denys causing problems for the CBs (mainly in the form of clearing them out whilst they were in the air).

After some handbags and the CM for the opposition claiming that he would punch Vin straight in the face as he has already been banned for 7 years before and therefore had no fear of such actions anymore, the Boars pulled level through Denys with a nice spin and finish in to the corner

The game continued to half time with the teams level and the boars feeling like they had enough to get something out of this game

Early in the second half the introduction of Ricky caused the oppo some troubles first with a horrific attempt at a 2 foot leg break but followed by a Kyle Walkeresque overlap and ball in which Glenn managed to latch on to and 'Lob' the keeper.

A bit of sleeping in the boars box allowed the CM who was usually more concerned with maintaining his bad boy image enough time to pull it level with a smart finish in to the corner. 2-2.

Somewhere around this point it all kicked off again and resulted in Neal being taken off to calm down, probably for his own safety more than anything as they had a guy who had punched somewhere and been banned for 7 years before, not sure if I've already mentioned him...

Then a brave left winger named Jordan decided that there was no man that could scare him as he jumped in a 50/50 with the oppos big mouthy CB and was forced off after coming off worse, valiant yet a little stupid nonetheless.

Roll on GD moment 3. A free kick on the edge of the boars box. Wall set up, Gubby ready for the shot over the wall. Oh no a short free kick to the side. A guy with a free shot on goal from a tight angle 12 yards out. Tame shot. Gubby easy save you might think?... WRONG. Gubby has been replaced by Massimo Taibi it

9 | MATCH REPORT

appears as he let's the ball through his legs putting the Boars 3-2 down (similar to kicking the ball out to the strikers feet as we did in debut to put the boars 3-2 down).

The Boars pushed for the rest of the game, squandering a few chances to pull level and maybe take the lead but, forgetting the pointless 4th in the last couple of minutes when we had set ourselves to all out attack, GD moment 4, the boars lose by the odd goal in a game they could and probably should have got something from another frustrating 90 minutes as the final whistle went and we begrudgingly shook hands with the hooligans from the other team we just had enough time for GD moment 5, the oppo telling us we were the best team they have played in the league.

One day we will turn that in to cold hard points....

Bill mate, take a week off next would ya!

STARTING LINE-UP: Gubby (GK), Alex, Vin, Welch, Jord, Neal, Mustard, Iain, Joe, Glenn, Fitzzy, Andy, Denys, Ricky

MAN OF THE MATCH: Denys

DICK OF THE DAY: Gubby – error of catastrophic proportions

4s

MERTON FC 2 OLD WILSONIANS 4

The first game of 2017 for the 4s finally came to pass, albeit with a bit of pitch shuffling required. Ambitiously scheduled to play at the Hood, the fixture against fellow relegation rivals Old Wilsonians was then moved to the delightful Wimbledon Common Extensions. However, upon arrival, the designated pitch was truly awful. Fortunately, there were an array to choose from, and after various inspections, play was declared possible on the furthest one, which was bathed in sunlight.

Onto the game then, and the Merton squad looked a good one, with only a couple of notable absentees. The formation was a sort of 4-5-1, albeit with a few nuances to it. Anyway, with the sun at their backs, sporting an AC Milan-style kit (with very 'snug' shorts), Merton faced the kick off in a confident mood, and immediately had the ascendancy in the game. Despite the poor surface, there was some good passing on the deck, and Aaron and Mike Vogt were providing excellent outlets on either side.

Chances and half chances came thick and fast, and Merton deservedly took the lead about 15 minutes in, with some good buildup in the midfield, and then a fine through ball sending Mike Vogt on his way. He still had plenty to do, but his finish in the top right corner of the net was pinpoint. 1-0 to Merton, and no more than they deserved.

The lads continued to work hard, but a cruel blow was struck soon after. Wilsonians hit a ball down the left-hand touchline which went out by a good few yards, before curling back in. Merton understandably stopped, in expectation of the throw. But the ref, who hadn't seen it, waved play on. A brief shambles in the box ensued, before a blocked clearance landed at the feet of the fortuitous Wilsonians striker, and he swept it home from point blank.

1-1 An entirely underserved equaliser, but unfortunately it changed the flow of the game. The visitors were suddenly dominant, and Merton, sans an injured Miley Elgar, were under the cosh. There was an air of inevitability about the second, although, credit to Wilsonians, it was an excellent team goal, finished off clinically between their two strikers, who shared an impressive exchange of passes.

2-1 and the worry was that the floodgates may open. But with a little over five minutes to go in the half, Merton were handed a lifeline out of nowhere. Having been under a lot of pressure, they produced an excellent team move, and after a series of Barcelona-esque passes, Aaron was put through on goal, and dabbed home in clinical fashion. 2-2; a fine goal to boot, and it gave Merton a wave of confidence as they finished the half strongly.

The chat was positive at half time - something that wasn't necessarily the case during the game itself - and there was genuine belief that this game was there for the taking. Rightly so, because once play got underway, Merton made a number of chances for themselves: Ed with a good run down the byline put in a dangerous ball, but no one could finish. Frankie put a powerful header just over the bar. And while Aaron's deliveries were superb, it was an attempted direct free kick which nearly found its way in at the near post.

But for all their chances, Merton weren't necessarily dominant, and Wilsonians were very much in the game too. And unfortunately it was they who made it count, as, midway through the half, Merton were unable to clear their lines after an oppo counter attack, and Wilsonians lashed home a resultant shot that bounded

11 | MATCH REPORT

into the net, despite Kieran getting a good hand on it.

3-2 it was, and it's fair to say the heads dropped somewhat. That said, Merton kept going, and a couple of good chances, and many more half chances, continued to accrue. Merton gave as good as they got. With a little under 10 minutes to go, the hosts then had little choice but to go for broke, eventually going with three at the back. Initially, it gave them good forward thrust, but it left them open at the back, and the killer blow arrived a few minutes later. With a massive overlap, the Merton defenders initially did well to close their opponents down. But the interception fell kindly to a Wilsonians players, and he put it away into the bottom corner.

4-2 and that's how things stayed, with the game petering out, and no clear cut opportunities thereafter. As the final whistle went, there was a clear sense of disappointment in the ranks. This was a relegation 6 pointer, and Merton had come off on the wrong end of it. More than that, it was a day where, despite a woeful pitch, they had actually played some decent football at times. Thus all the more frustrating to not get a result. Hopefully though, the good things get taken into next week. They'll need to, because Carshalton lie in wait!

STARTING LINE-UP: Kieran Lee (GK), Ed Plaistow, Mike Todt, Joe Plumridge, John Gridley, Mikey Elgar, Chris Outred, Michael Vogt, Sonny Kennedy, Aaron Loftus, Dom Plumridge

SUBS: Frankie Kaligorou, Joe Vaughan, Bill

SCORERS: Mike Vogt, Aaron Loftus

MAN OF THE MATCH: Mike Vogt

5s

MERTON FC
KEW ASSOCIATION

GAME CALLED OFF

6s

MERTON FC
SOUTH BANK CUACO

GAME CALLED OFF

7s

MERTON FC
CARSHALTON

GAME CALLED OFF

ADAM AHMAD EDWARDS



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

I work as a Research Assistant at UCL Respiratory. We are currently working on a clinical trial for a treatment for some forms of Lung Cancer. It sound more fancy than it is as I am pretty much lab bitch.

2. How did you end up at Merton FC?

Me and my friend Josh play 5-a-side with some of our other friends every Tuesday at Rock Lane in Barnes, we wanted to start also playing 11-a-side and so googled teams that were close to each of us. Merton looked the most professional; some teams just having a number posted!

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

Probably last week playing against the 6s in a close fought derby. It was great to come up against familiar faces and have a good game.

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

Arsenal. My favorite team and also the style of play is amazing and would be great to play in.

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

Eat porridge on game day, even though I really can't stand it.

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

To help the team in any way, and also to keep playing well and to try and start scoring some goals!

Player of the season (so far): Tough as a lot of players have played well. But probably Tom, playing like Bonucci by spraying the ball about from centre back. In the Prem, annoyingly I think Diego Costa.

Childhood Team: Wimbledon

Favourite team in the UK: Arsenal/AFC Wimbledon

Favourite team outside the UK: Borussia Dortmund

Childhood Hero: Its between Josh K-H and my Asian grandmother.

But the Grandma shades it, a tough lady who worked hard for the family.

Favourite Food: Grandmas chicken curry with Paratha

Favourite Drink: KA Karribbean Kola

Favourite Band/Artist: Tough as it changes every week, but right now its Queens Of The Stone Age/Danny Brown

RAPID FIRE

TOM BENHAM



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

I work in real estate investment for a small asset manager. I would describe myself as someone who doesn't take life too seriously, enjoys playing sports, drinking, and traveling.

2. How did you end up at Merton FC?

Moved down the road from the Hood and heard good things about the club. Joined with Chris and Nick for the start of the 15/16 season.

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

Getting players player of the year in my first season for the 3s.

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

Barcelona

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

Grande Americano before kickoff.

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

Poor start, hoping to reach double digits.

Player of the season (so far): Wilgo

Childhood Team: Crystal Palace

Favourite team in the UK: Crystal Palace

Favourite team outside the UK: Barcelona

Childhood Hero: Roberto Baggio

Favourite Food: Seafood

Favourite Drink: Peroni

Favourite Band: Bob Marley and the Wailers

RAPID FIRE

U9s

MERTON FC
WANDGAS YOUTH

GAME CALLED OFF

U11S

MERTON FC
OXSHOTT ROYALS DIAMOND

GAME CALLED OFF

U13s

MERTON FC
ROCK LANE UTD

GAME CALLED OFF

U14s

MERTON FC
ESHER LIONS

GAME CALLED OFF

U15s

MERTON FC
HANWORTH SPORTS

GAME CALLED OFF

WHO'S WHERE AND WHEN

SATURDAY 28 JANUARY 2017

1s
MERTON FC v IBIS EAGLES
Joseph Hood Recreation Ground – 14:00

2s
MERTON FC v ST JAMES OLD BOYS
Joseph Hood Recreation Ground – 14:00

3s
OLD WILSONIANS v MERTON FC
Old Wilsonians Sports Ground – 14:00

4s
MERTON FC v CARSHALTON
Joseph Hood Recreation Ground – 14:00

5s
HSBC v MERTON FC
HSBC Sports & Social Club – 14:00

6s
MERTON FC v OLD SUTTONIANS
Joseph Hood Recreation Ground – 13:45

7s
OLD BLUES v MERTON FC
GAME CALLED OFF

SUNDAY 29 JANUARY 2017

U9s
MAYFORD ATHLETIC TIGERS v MERTON FC
Away – AM

U11s
MERTON FC v CLAYGATE ROYAL COLTS
Home – AM

U13s
NO GAME

U14s
MERTON FC v MET POLICE YOUTH RED
Home – AM

U15s
NO GAME

MERTON FOOTBALL CLUB

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