

# The Merton Way



**2018 – 2019 season**

**Issue 8**

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## **CONTENTS**

**1-2: Note from the Chairman**

**3: The opposition: Old Westminster Citizens**

**4-8: Meet the VPs**

**9: Social Boar-terfly**

**10: Last week's results**

**11: This week's fixtures**

**12-13: 1s**

**14: 2s**

**15: 3s**

**16-19: 4s (this week and last)**

**20: 5s**

**21-23: 6s**

**24-26: 6s v Old Wilsonians 9s**

**24-26: U10s v Old Coulsdon Colts**



### Note from the Chairman

Last week we had a bumper edition of the Merton Way setting the scene in many ways for this coming week's festivities. We have three good SAL league games scheduled at the Hood preceded by the much anticipated veterans match Merton v Old Westminster Citizens and then followed by the Christmas Party Merton Jump Off.

It was a good day at the Hood last Saturday- I watched the 1s play Dorkinians in the first round of the AFA Surrey/Kent Senior Cup of which they were in fact the holders. It was a good game to watch and although we scored first and our oppo took time to settle they were in all honesty pretty comfortable winners. They had some supporters who came along and enjoyed the Merton Bar. A win a way from home is always that little bit better. They are a very good football club clearly on the way up. They play Norsemen this Saturday at home in the AFA Senior Cup. Norsemen have won all their games in our division this season and it will be an interesting match up!

So we are very pleased to welcome Old Westminster Vets to The Hood this Saturday and of course many of our vets too who will be turning up to play, drink and reminisce. I have been at Merton nearly twenty years now and I have fond memories of OWCs games as we have generally been in the same lower divisions. Jim Perrin has written a potted history of the club and I remember their centenary in 2008. It was on a Sunday and I had decided to go along to the game to be played against the SAL Rep side but unfortunately the Reps had too many no shows and I had to get on the phone to some of our players to come along and swell the numbers. And so Gash, Lofty, Thommo and Sherbs all turned out for the Reps. (Pic). This game included a trademark Merton Goal – Thommo corner lofty back post header which I mentioned to Jock Henderson just before the kick was taken. I remember more of the games at their ground which is a sad loss to SAL football as it had three or four good well drained pitches with car parking, I always worry about parking. The bar was very homely and changing rooms needed upgrading but a great facility. OWCs was also a very well administered club and always good to see Jock Henderson for a chat.



### Note from the Chairman Cont

There were some very feisty local derbies. I particularly remember a win there possibly in 2008 when Ackers scored a few goals with a couple being spectacular long range efforts. But the best season was 2010/11 when we were both promoted. OWCs had a cracking side and so did we. We lost 1-0 at their place early on in the season and that was the only game we lost. I seem to recall that there was something unsatisfactory about their goal. It was either very early, very late or very dodgy but I remember coming home a bit miffed. However I don't think I have ever come home from losing 1-0 entirely content with the afternoon's events even if you are played off the park and only get one kick in the game it seems in fairness that should have been the equaliser. They drew with us at our place 2-2 a touch fortuitously. We were 2-0 up at half time and it should have been more but they came back at us. This was a very high quality game. But we were both promoted OWCs as decisive champions but they lost a lot of players next season in Division 2 and did not win a game. Relegated to Division 3 and stayed there till the very sad end. We secured promotion that year at Bank of England (Pic)

It has already stirred some happy memories .  
Good to catch up with Jim and the boys!





### The opposition: Old Westminster Citizens

This week promises to be a highlight of the year, with our vets v OWC vets followed by our Christmas jump off. We continue with the meet the VPs section, but for this page we turn to Old Westminster Citizens. In honesty, these games are always a conflict for me personally having been the last ex-OWC player still at Merton. I fondly remember being the youth in teams that comprised of the likes of Wally Hof, Jim Perrin, Simon Lehey and even a few games with Jock. It would be nice to some day play another game with them; only 10 years to go! One thing is for certain for this Saturday – it will be a highly entertaining affair.

To ensure adequate representation of our esteemed opponents Jim has done a brief history of the club below for your viewing pleasure:

Old Westminster Citizens played in the Southern Amateur League from its inception Until 2015 and celebrated their 100th anniversary in 2008. We used to have 6 sides, plus a Veterans side but in recent years we have lost our home ground in Mitcham, South London, along with our very own club house and bar. This was down to the fact that the school could no longer use the sports ground economically....a sad state of affairs! The Club was primarily set up to provide Football to Old Boys of Westminster City School and over time we began to involve many players who were looking to enjoy the more social side of amateur football.

We are now down to one team of Veterans who compete in the Old Boys Cup every year and by doing so have kept our affiliation alive and still proudly boast being in existence for 110 Years.





## Meet the VPs





### Mark Chappell

Year Joined: Season 1992/93

Teams: Played competitively for the 2s, 3s, 4s, 5s, 6s and I remember the odd eventful cameo for the 7s - Only played 1s in friendly games

Position: Started Left back, moved inside to play centre Back and am occasionally seen with the keepers gloves on.

Offices: Managed the 2s, 3s, 4s, and 6s. Club Treasurer, Bar Manager, Fixtures Secretary and now Vice President  
Honours:

SAL (Minor Section South) Division 6 Champions 2005 – 06

SAL (Minor Section South) Division 3 Runners Up 2006 – 07

SAL (Minor Section South Division 5 Runners up) 2008 – 09

SAL Senior Novets Cup Runners Up 2008-09

SAL (Minor Section South) Division 4 Runners Up 2011 – 12

SAL Senior Novets Cup Runners Up 2011 - 12

SAL (Minor Section South) Division 3 Runners Up 2012 – 13

SAL (Junior South) Division 5 Winners 2017 – 18

AFA Intermediate Novets Cup Runners Up 2017 - 18

Club Person of the Year 2004

Best Moment: Winning the League last season is tough to top, at my age you dont get many opportunities to collect silverware

Worst: Losing the league to Alleyns on goal difference in 2012/13

Hopes: The club is bigger and stronger than any one individual. I hope that one day I'll see my son wearing the mighty boar on his chest, thats assuming the Professional career doesn't take off :)

Pics - 5th XI League winners 05/06 and me scoring in the final 08/09



## Meet the VPs







### Mark Dix

Mark joined Merton FC at the age of 18 in 1962; he came to us after playing semi pro for Chertsey. He really did get “boot money”. Literally a brown envelope containing his expenses left in his boots as they were hanging up in the changing room!

Mark played right half (in today's game right midfield). He was a regular in our first XI for 10 years until he sustained a serious knee injury resulting in numerous operations.

Back in the day, Merton fielded 9 teams each week and during his time playing for the Club, in one memorable season, Mark played for all 9 teams. By this time he was coerced into playing in goal, a position he continued to play in until he hung up his boots at the age of 66.

Whilst he was playing for the first XI the team gained promotion to the second division, a photo shows the team at Carshalton FC who they beat to claim the title. He also gained honours by winning promotion with the second, fourth and fifth XI.

It can't be proven but it is said that Mark let in over a 1,000 goals playing for the various teams!!!!

The social side of the club back then was very lively to say the least. Regular parties were held at John Innes and black tie dinners at the Dog and Fox Wimbledon were all well attended and thoroughly enjoyed by all. Even the children got a look in when Father Christmas came to their party at the clubhouse.

John Innes clubhouse was quite unique, its sloping floor was something to experience especially after a jug or two! The meals prepared in the pretty grotty kitchen by Pat Kimber and family were the envy of the league.

Merton's Sunday team was called Norbex because in those days the AFA would not recognise Sunday football and therefore we couldn't use our club name – Merton FC.

On the organisation front Mark took on the role of Team Secretary including notifying every player of their match details – no computers or spreadsheet to help with the task. The weekly read was eagerly awaited by all members. He was Treasurer for 10 years and also Club Secretary for a long period.



## Meet the VPs





## The Social Boar-terfly



### OAP GAME – SATURDAY 1<sup>st</sup> December, Merton FC

Respect your elders! And cheer our vets on against Old West Citz – it may be their last step before Walking Football/the home.

### XMAS JUMP OFF –

# NOW SATURDAY 1<sup>st</sup> DECEMBER

Hopefully you're all busy knitting your jumpers for this year!!  
Details to follow. Fury fight will be shown in the bar.





## Last week's results

-	1s	1	V	3	Dorkinians
-	2s	1	V	3	West Wickham 3s
-	3s	1	V	5	Polytechnic 5s
-	4s	6	V	2	Actonians 7s
-	5s	2	V	5	Old Wilsonians 5s
-	6s	2	V	2	Bank of England 5s
-	U14s	0	V	3	CB Hounslow Utd Greens
-	U13s	1	V	2	Hampton Rangers Juniors
-	U10s	3	V	3	Old Coulsdon Colts





## This week's fixtures

League	1s	V	EBOG
League	2s	V	South Bank Reserves
League	Carshalton 4s	V	3s
League	Polytechnic 7s	V	4s
League	5s	V	Polytechnic 6s
League	Vets	V	OWC Vets
League	U14s	V	Franham Town Wanderers
League	Mitcham Park Stripes	V	U13s
League	U10s	V	Spelthorne Sports Colts



### 1s 1 – 3 Dorkinians

It was a pretty typical Saturday in November, it was cold and it had been raining all morning but the pitch seemed to have coped quite well so it was boggy rather than sopping wet. We were playing a team that was doing well in the top division albeit in the AFA league so we didn't quite know what to expect.

The game kicked off and Merton started squeezing quickly considering the rather lack lustre warm up. The front 3 closed them down quickly with full of energy which the opposition didn't seem to know how to deal with, within the first 5 minutes Ivan had got onto a loose pass back inside there penalty area and unselfishly played it back to a screaming colleague who was running into the box.....this should have been a simple stroke into the goal, little did he know it was Jimbo....the shot was smothered. Another 5 minutes later and George had hassled the defenders and won the ball back, dangerously running to the by line, he managed to pull it back to Vanny who tried to direct it first time into the goal but narrowly missed the far post. Dorkinians were in trouble and the Merton lads had their tails up.....blood was in the water! Unfortunately, although there seemed to be enough chances to get a goal, it didn't materialise. The game settled a bit until a bit later when George ran down the right wing and squared to Pritch (our stand-in striker) who calmly slotted home with a surprisingly good finish. 1-0 Merton and it looked like it might be an enjoyable day.

The first half seemed to change significantly after this and the Oppo got into their stride, keeping the ball well and attacking with purpose. Their left winger started to really show his quality by causing trouble every time he got the ball, tricky for a big fella. Soon after this they scored with a well worked move and a clean strike from the right hand side of the box. They seemed to realise they had got themselves out of trouble and Merton couldn't seem to get and hold on to the ball.....Dorkinians seemed to cause problems each time they attacked and after a simple throw in, their winger flicked the ball over Joe Grew and volleyed the ball from a tight angle into the top left corner, a good goal but it was pretty lucky to nestle in the only place our keeper couldn't get to. The first half ended 2-1 down after a good start.



### **1s 1 – 3 Dorkinians (cont)**

There were a few forced changes at half time and Max had volunteered to go in goal and had reassured Clappers that he has significant experience between the posts. The second half seemed to be a completely different game, we seemed to have more of the ball but we were unable to really create much and didn't have any clear cut chances. The quick distribution from Max didn't let Dorkinians settle and they didn't seem to like the end to end game. There seemed to be plenty of fight left in the Merton boys who all pushed and battled to the end but then Merton conceded a free kick about 35 yards out, to the right hand side of the box. Merton expected a well whipped in cross but what resulted was even worse, the player hit a clean shot which again found the top corner of the Merton goal with little our deputised keeper could do. 3-1 to Dorkinians.

All in all not a great day but Merton did well with the players that were available.

MoM: George (A good performance again)

DOD: Vanny (For no particular reason)



**2s 1 v 3 West Wickham 3s**

**NO REPORT**





### 3s 1 v 5 Polytechnic 5s

The Boars returned to the hood against the team currently top of the league. Another much changed squad was depleted further by late withdrawals of Joe Vaughan for work related reasons and Adam Lynch whose better half disobeyed strict instructions and gave birth to their daughter, a massive congrats from all at the club. A positive was the return to fold of Dan Kelly who after his world tour. Due to the multiple ins and outs most players were asked to play out of position.

#### **First half**

The game kicked off and it didn't take long for the visitors to take the lead, the ball was lost in central midfield and the ball was played through for the Polytechnic forward to side foot the ball past an exposed keeper, 0-1. After that early shock to the system the boars started to gain a foothold in the game, moving the ball around well and creating a couple of chances but not testing the keeper.

But all the good work was undone by a second goal for the away team, after breaking free down the right wing the ball was delivered to the back post where the opposition player headed home, 0-2. It then got worse as shortly after Polytechnic scored a third after failing to clear a corner the ball was worked back into the box where the opposition player rounded the keeper and slotted the ball into the in guarded net, 0-3 at half time.

#### **Second half**

The boars retook the field after lengthy team talk, just the one change was made, Fitz took up residence between the sticks and Iain was called into action outfield with Dan Kelly making way.

But the positive start to the half Merton were looking for didn't materialise and from a direct free kick on the edge of the box Polytechnic scored a fourth and really ended the game as a contest.

The one bright note was the performance of San Peace over the 90 minutes and that performance was rewarded with his second goal in as many game. It was a great finish from a good 25 yards out that caught the keeper unawares, 1-4.

The scoring was completed when more space down the Merton left was exploited by the Polytechnic right midfielder, the ball across the six yard box was stuck away, 1-5.

MoM - Dan Peace

DoD- Iain Evans

A bad result but no time to feel sorry for ourselves as the small matter of a local derby against Carshalton coming up, a must win in every sense.



### 4s 6 – 2 Actonians 7s

Following last week's draw at home to West Wickham, it was another home game for the 4s in the form of Actonians Association 7s.

Having reviewed last week's result something has to be done formation wise. As a collective, we opted for a 3-5-2 formation. The back 3 consisted on John Gridley, Joe Plumridge and Darren Avey with yours truly (Ed Plaistow) and Thomas Murphy taking up the roles of left and right wing back respectively. The midfield three was made up of Andrew Stears (start Full deserves following last week's man of the match performance), Roman Bilivskyi and Andrew Minkevich. The strike force was made up of Denys Zhurbiy and new recruit Isaac Ssebugwawo. Callum Fisher arrived last so had to settle for a place on the bench.

The game started well with Merton on the front foot from the off. It wasn't until half hour mark however that we manage to grab our first goal of the game. Isaac, causing a nuisance in the box was clipped and as a result the referee pointed to the point. Up stepped Denys to convert under the keeper into the bottom left. 1-0 and that's how it remained going into the break.

We kept the formation and personnel the same going into the second period. The plan was to pick up where we left off in the first half, however this was not the case. A lapse in defence allowed the visitors the chance to equalise which they did with ease following a 4-on-2 situation in favour of Actonians.

It wasn't long until we regained the lead, Romans right footed half-volley squeezing under the keeper. Once again, Actonians upped the ante and managed to equalise for the second time in the game. I can't remember in what fashion they did but they did!

Fortunately that was as much as Actonians had as it was all Merton from then on.



## **4s 6 – 2 Actonians 7s (cont)**

With 30 minutes to go Merton took advantage of the game. Roman played a delightful ball from left to right which was met by the skipper. The control of the ball was Messi-esque however the finish.....words won't do it justice! Having beat the left back a composed left-footed finish from all of 20-25 yards beat the keeper....he might have rushed out leaving the goal gapping but the finish was of the highest quality! (Not to blow my own trumpet).

3 soon became 4 when Darren Avey got on the scoresheet, bundling home following John Gridley's header back across goal. That goal was followed up with a 4th from Isaac and then a 5th from Andrew Minkevich.

All in all it was a great team performance and one we hope we can take into next weekend's game away to Polytechnic 6s where we hope to better the 1-1 draw from the previous meeting.

**FINAL SCORE:** Merton 4s **6 – 2** Actonians Association 7s

**SCORER(S):** Denys Zhurbiy (pen), Roman Bilivitskiy, Edward Plaistow, Darren Avey, Isaac Ssebugwawo, Andrew Minkevich

**MOTM:** Andrew Minkevich

**DOTD:** Edward Plaistow

**STARTING LINE-UP:** Kieran Lee (GK), John Gridley, Joe Plumridge, Darren Avey, Thomas Murphy, Edward Plaistow, Roman Bilivitskiy, Andrew Minkevich, Andrew Stears, Denys Zhurbiy, Isaac Ssebugwawo (Callum Fisher)



## **4s 2 – 2 West Wickham 6s (17/11)**

Following a break from league action last weekend, this weekend we welcomed West Wickham to Joseph Hood.

With the 5s having defeated them earlier in the season (albeit against 10 men) and us having defeated the 5s already this season, on paper this should have been a routine three points, everyone knows however that football doesn't work in that way...

With KO delayed by 5 minutes due to the opposing keeper running late, it gave us that little extra time to discuss the best formation possible. We opted to line up in a 4-4-2 formation with Kieran in goal, from right to left the defence was made up Ed Plaistow, John Gridley, Joe Plumridge and Thomas Murphy, the midfield from right to left was Callum Fisher, Roman Bilivskyi, Andrew Minkevich and Lewis Riches. The driving force up top consisted of Nick Englefield and Denys Zhurbiy.

It was West Wickham that started the game on the front foot, passing the ball around with confidence and finding gaps that seemed to open up our midfield. This confidence on the ball resulted in the first goal of the game. How it came about was a blur....

So was the second!!!!

Shortly after conceding, a change was forced upon us. Dan Kelly came on to replace Joe Plumridge. This meant that with no other option, Denys slotted into the heart of the defence alongside John. Dan Kelly partnered Nick up top.

If we were to get something out of the game, we knew that we had to pull our fingers out, work as a team and graft.

10 minutes before the break we managed to get ourselves bank in the game when Nick rifled in a right footed shot into the top corner. Nothing the jeep could do about it. I don't know what was more remarkable, the technique to finish how he did or the fact that he managed to get through 90 minutes without getting injured!

Having reduced the deficit to the single goal, we were forced into another change before the break with Roman suffering an injury. Andrew Stears came on in his place.





### 4s 2 – 2 West Wickham 6s (cont)

Due the second half and it seemed like it was a different Merton team that took to the field. West Wickham we're starting to tire early on which allowed us to take advantage. Although chances were created, composure in front of goal let us down. A prime example was when Dan Kelly blazed over the bar following a peach of a ball from Andrew Minkevich. It was harder to miss than score! That miss awarded him with the Dick of the Day award.

Since being introduced into the 4s setup, Andrew Stears has adapted to the competitive nature of the league and stood out on more than one occasion. This was the case again as he was calm and composed on the ball at all time and picking the right pass 99% of the time. And it was The same person that contributed to our equaliser. His ball from the left was squared to Lewis Riches, who was in acres of space down the right. With pace to burn, he beat of challenger and delivered a low ball into the box. Attempting to put it out for a corner, the opposing defender didn't get enough on it and unfortunately for him it nestled in the bottom corner.

A difficult game but I think a far result. That is now our 4th draw of the season so we need to think about what can be done to turn the draws into wins.

Next week we host Actonians Association which is when we hope that 3 points, rather than 1 (or none) are award in favour of Merton.

**FINAL SCORE:** Merton 4s **2 – 2** West Wickham 6s

**SCORER(S):** Nick Englefield, OG

**MOTM:** Andrew Stears

**DOTD:** Dan Kelly

**STARTING LINE-UP:** Kieran Lee (GK), Edward Plaistow (Capt.), John Gridley, Joe Plumridge (Dan Kelly), Thomas Murphy, Callum Fisher, Roman Bilivitskiy (Andrew Stears), Andrew Minkevich, Lewis Riches, Nick Englefield, Denys Zhurbiy



### 5s 2 – 5 Old Wilsonians 5s

It seems like I write the same thing every week, but this one truly was a must win after a pretty awful run of results, despite putting in a couple of good performances. This was must win as the teams around us still have games in hand, and we were playing the only team beneath us in the league at the start of the day. The feeling was that a good performance with a little more composure and a few less mistakes in a game, we would have a good chance at only a 2<sup>nd</sup> win of the season.

Ironically, we stressed the need for a strong start before the game, and in true 5s fashion that meant we raced to a 3-0 deficit. The first goal was disappointing with their player unopposed crossing in from the left. As simple as you like, their striker unmarked nodded in. The 2<sup>nd</sup> goal was equally as calamitous. Their defender ran 20-30 yards to take a throw in, ample time to pick up their players in the middle. To that end, Josh shouted that their big striker was free yet we were very slow to react. The throw in came in, their striker had a run unopposed and nodded in for a gift of a second. The third, well, you're never truly a member of the 5s defence until you've scored an own goal. A free kick came in from deep, and their player, running away from goal, stooped to get a head to it. It hit his back and went across the box, where Scott jumped for it. His looped header went backwards and nestled nicely in the corner of the goal. Had he not got there, there were players lining up to take the chance for him, but still it counts as his first og for the club. Welcome to the 5s backline Scott!

So, 3-0 down and facing a very bad result, we actually started playing. We stroked the ball around and kept possession well, creating a few chances. Our breakthrough came about 5-10 mins before half time. D made a good run and was played through. His shot was blocked, however with the keeper having dived already, the rebound was calmly guided into the back of the net. 3-1 and in the ascendency.

And we unusually picked up where we left off, stroking the ball around as if we were Barcelona. We were finding time and space on the ball, however that was quickly undone by a bad decision. Dwayne, sliding in inside the box, appeared to win the ball in his sliding tackle, however the referee saw it differently. He appealed to the player's better nature to ask whether it wasn't a pen, who was as honest as a cockney wheeler and dealer. Pen given, Wilsonians 4-1 up.

That knocked the wind out of our asses, and our fifth goal was pretty soft. We clawed one back as Pete followed up a decent save by their keeper to score a consolation. 5-2, and a massive opportunity missed.

MOTM: Matt

DOTD: Lee



### **6s 2 v 2 Bank of England 5s**

Bank of England, must be one of the best locations to play a game of football on a Saturday at any level. No matter which pitch your allocated, the groundsman does a remarkable job, as well as the free half time oranges and post-match hospitality, yes, BoE is a fixture you look forward to.

With numbers low compared to the previous week, a thread bear team rocks up at the BoE for a testing game against a team that is unbeaten in the league, but was turning over in the cup to a heavy defeat the week before, maybe this was a good time (or not) to be taking the boys in (dark) blue on.

The 6s turned up in dribs and drabs due to the local road works, with the final player managing to get to the pitch with 10 minutes to go. MQ, as ever, ready for his favourite roll between the sticks, the back 4 this week see Steve B at left back, Scott stepping up at short notice to the right back roll, Mark Chappell answering the call at less than 24 hours' notice at centre back, paired with Joe D and his glass foot, wheeled in from the treatment room to complete the back 4.

Midfield welcomes the new signing of James E, the young left winger/forward also being thrown in to his first game at short notice, right wing sees Daban retain his place ahead of Andrew who starts on the bench and making up the centre pairing is the Phil T and DG, who drops back into last season roll (needs must!), this leaves the newly signed 6s striker, Lewis, up front with the retuning BG, recalled at an hours' notice to make up the numbers.

Looking towards the oppo, the team looks strong and unaffected at the loss in the cup last week to a team no less than 7 divisions or so above ours, looking unfazed they kick off and retain the early possession. A few probing balls over the top to their 'big man' up front is dealt with by the 6s centre backs, making light work of the early attacks and looking very composed, good communication between the defence and midfield close the gaps and contain the BoE5s game plan.

With the 6s first real attack, BoE realise that 6s have a formidable attack with no less than 4 players that have more pace than your average gazelle in the south London wilderness! Lewis, being marked by Hagrid's smaller 9ft brother, will never beat him in the air, but in a foot race... see ya pal!

However, its BoE5s who get the lucky break, from what looked like a tame attack came a weak penalty, MC marking the striker close. reaches in and catches the players shin, the contact was far more audible than the tackle, with the player not even going over, the ref points to the spot, the pen is dispatched and MQ dives the right way, but the ball is just out of reach for 1-0

Down against the run of play, the remaining of the half is mainly the 6s, with the odd BoE5s attack thrown in, Phil and DG boss the midfield and win almost every Ariel attack, the 2 working well together with DG 'breaking' up play (or just bulldozing the oppo off the ball) and PT skipping around the challenges, its only bad luck and poor finishing form the front that keeps the score 1-0 at have time



### 6s 2 v 2 Bank of England 5s

2<sup>nd</sup> sees Dobby comes in for the injury Daban who took a nasty knock to the foot, and Ricky replacing Scott at right back, the 6s restart the game as they finished the 1<sup>st</sup>. Although BoE are more composed and looking more effective its 6s who gain the early exchanges and now test the keeper. The formation changes from 4-4-2, to a 4-3-3 with James tucking in with Lewis and BG, and Dobby slotting beside PT and DG.

The phenomenal pace of the front 3 are just one pass away from being great, countless times the BoE are made to look static as each player slips in behind, but can't quite make the final ball count, and once again, against the run of play, BoE make a set play count when there 9ft defender ambles forward and gets on the end of a corner to plant a soft header above Ricky on the far post and into the top corner for a undeserved 2-0 lead

With 15 minutes to go and 2-0 down against the run of play, the 6s step it up a notch, midfield retain possession from BoE and the counter is on, BG steps on the after burners leaving a few in his wake, delivers a cross, Lewis who is also a MAC1 arrives in the box to firmly side foot his shot into the bottom corner for 2-1 and less than 10 minutes to go

BoE have their backs against the wall, 6s are now stringing the passes around and its not long before the pressure pays off, again the midfield win the battle, PT goes on a mazy run, a couple of 1-2s out wide and the ball is threaded inwards to DG, with one touch, fires in a solid pass to Lewis, with back to goal, flicks the ball between the 2 defenders and into the path of the advancing James, with composure takes a calming touch, waits for the keeper to commit and slots the ball home for a debut goal which brings the game level at 2-2

On top and probing, the 6s pass and move is tearing the oppo apart, PT and DG, again in the thick of it, are instrumental in the build up to another fine move, once again the front 3 terrorise the BoE and it would seem the winner is beckoning. Some quick passing sets James free inside the box, selling his man a one ticket and only the keeper to beat, find himself pushed wide and on the weaker peg, this results in the keeper winning this battle and keeping the score at 2-2, but 'o' so close...

With the final minutes beckoning, it's a BoE attack which looks like nicking the game, 6s pressing for the winner are caught out as BoE go 3v2 at the back, a goal mouth scrabble and a few lucky moments sees the ball go for another corner, the 9ft'er steps up but the ball is hit short, the clearance now put 6s on an 2v2 attack, BG breaks away and threads Lewis through only for the ref to blow the whistle, no way could he be off side as he was still in his own half, bemused and ready to protest, its only them realised the game has been brought to a close for full time... finishing 2-2.

Great game and by far the best the 6s have performed, even with a make shift team. Bank played their part, and will no doubt be pushing towards the top as they do play some neat, tidy football and on any other day would have rolled the 6s over, just that today it finally clicked for the boys in yellow and although down, but not out, was unluckily not to nick it at the death.

No game next week due to the Merton Vets game, where no less than 6 players from the 6s will take part in some way, shape or form, we return the following week in the AFA cup, against last year's runners up!





## **6s 2 v 2 Bank of England 5s**

MOTM: Close call as it was great team performance, Mark C, Phil T having strong games but getting booked in the process, Steve b also just missing out to the final winner, Lewis, great to have him back in the fold, and 4 goals in 2 games is joint top score for the 6s with DG

DOTD: Mark C. Gave away a pen and got booked for an 'amazing' last ditch tackle which not only up ended the player but managed to spin the poor chap 360\* mid-air...! (apart from that, he had a great game)



### U10s 3 v 3 Old Coulsdon Colts

There were clouds above and the sky was overcast. Today's match was a friendly against Old Coulsdon Colts who managed to confuse everyone before kick off by arriving in the same yellow and black jackets that Merton wear. Top marks for originality, no other team have done that before.

The first half started with Merton playing from right to left. The early exchanges were fairly even; both sides were giving away the ball fairly cheaply and putting themselves under pressure. Was this Colts' game plan? Press Merton and force them into mistakes. After 4 minutes, the ball was given away by Merton a few yards outside of their own penalty area. This was a golden invitation for Colts to attack Merton's goal and they did. Their striker fired a shot into the top left corner of Merton's goal. Max was unable to save it. 1 nil to Colts

Play continued to be quite disjointed and the pitch was definitely a factor. If this was a horse race, the going would be described as Good to Soft. At times, Merton did try to stick to their free-flowing pass and move style of football. They were able to create some chances.

Percy had a shot that went wide after 9 minutes.

Play was halted temporarily after a couple of canine pitch invaders literally ran circles around players from both teams before one of them marked his territory in the Colts goal. Enough said. Then their owner sheepishly called them off the pitch allowing the game to re-commence. Possession was still being turned over which made for an entertaining game for the neutral. After some good approach work, Faris had a shot blocked.

With 12 minutes gone, Harry, who was having an outstanding game, made three successive good tackles in the space of 1 minute. There was also good defensive work from Ollie and Joe.

After 13 minutes, some good link up play for Merton. Rio to Faris. Faris to Rio. Rio ends his run with a shot across to the right side of the goal that was wide of the post. Then it was Colts turn to exert some pressure as they had a succession of corners.

15 minutes played, Harry made two decisive tackles and then a great pass through to Maxwell who was now racing away towards the Colts goal. When he arrived at the edge of the penalty area he struck a powerful shot to the bottom right of the goal. It went in! 1 all.



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Merton were now in the ascendancy; more chances were being created by them. There was some good work in midfield by Louis and Percy. 23 minutes on the clock; good work on the right by Joe, a nice stepover and then a cross. Percy connected on the half volley and smashed it into the top left corner of the Colts goal. 2-1 to Merton! Not long afterwards the ref blew for half-time.

The second half started with Merton kicking left to right and uphill. Colts started the second half with increased intensity and started to apply pressure again. During the 4<sup>th</sup> minute, Colts won a tackle outside of Merton penalty area and launched an attack. Their striker hit his shot into the top right corner of Merton's goal. It went in! 2 all.

8 minutes in, Maxwell controls the ball from a Colts goal kick and heads towards goal. He spots Joe on the overlap and makes the pass. Joe shoots and hits the side netting.

11 mins played, Colts launch an attack resulting in a low shot to the bottom left of Merton's goal. Max could only parry, the follow up shot was put wide by Colts. That was a close one!

13 minutes, Rio wins a tackle in midfield and threads a fine pass through to Maxwell who is now advancing to the Colts goal. He strikes a fierce shot to the bottom right corner of the goal. You don't stop those! It's in. 3-2 to Merton!

14 minutes gone. If ever there was a time to consolidate a lead, this was it. In years to come all of the boys will learn more about 'game management' and 'seeing a game out'. Today there was none of that. Within a minute of Merton's third goal and the Fortnite inspired goal celebrations, Colts were bearing down on Merton's goal and Max could do nothing to stop the shot when it came. Boom. Top right corner and in it went. 3 all. Disappointed at immediately conceding, Merton went in search of another goal. After 16 minutes, a Dave corner resulted in Max hooking the ball just wide.

18 minutes gone, another Dave corner; Rio has the chance this time. His shot was saved.

In the last five minutes, more pressure on the Colts goal from Merton, more chances created but unfortunately no more goals.

The referee blew for the end of the game. Dave was awarded the Man of the Match. Well done again, boys! Let's keep it going for Match Day 12.

Author: Mike Pitt



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