

The Merton Way



2018 – 2019 season

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Note from the Chairman

Last Saturday was a classic, totally memorable Merton day. In the words of one of our more eloquent members 'A Belter'. It all started rather worryingly with torrential rain and it was something of a miracle that any football was played at the Hood at all. The day was such a success thanks to a lot of people and here they are.

It all started at 11.45 down at the Hood with pitch inspections. Toddy and Iain Evans' optimism seemed to dry the pitches which were surprisingly playable. The Vets game was a 12.30 Kick off. Thanks to Jim Perrin for bringing along the OWCs team that won the match 5-3 and then repaired to the bar just as enthusiastically. Thanks to Dodge, Peter Kemp and Mark Chappell for getting our team into shape and battling back to 3-3. Our vets looked like a proper football team as well with the ceremonial white kit provided by the kit fairy.

When this was over SAL footy took over. The 1s hosted EBOG, unbeaten so far in our division and the 2s played South Bank. The 5s took on a very enthusiastic Polytechnic side and confirmed my first view that pitch 1 was unplayable, if not for Poly definitely for our 5s.

The 1s had a terrific win with a stunning all round performance. 3-0 up at half time with something of a rearguard action in the second half. Our defence was committed and resolute. But EBOG, rather irritatingly for us never gave up playing some very good passing football which if we did not stop them, rather irritatingly for them the crossbar did. The 2s had a good 2-0 win with 'Clappers the Cat' getting a Man of the Match award for going in goal for them and is now a good bet for the end of season goalkeepers Golden Gloves (Shurely Shum Mishtake).

Then of course all the action moved to the best ever bar which was buzzing. The 1s and 2s were obviously buoyed up by their wins but the 5s bless them seemed undaunted as ever!! Thanks to Sharon and Vicky for bar and a very good curry. And then everyone sat down and had a quiet drink and discussed the pros and cons of our Brexit position. Oh no they didn't. All the troubles of the world and UK were brushed aside and everyone had a cracking night a good drink and a memorable Jump off.

There will be many more and thanks to all those who made it happen.



Xmas Jump Off





Xmas Jump Off





Last week's results

-	1s	3	V	1	EBOG
-	2s	2	V	0	South Bank Reserves
-	3s	0	V	3	Carshalton 4s
-	4s	3	V	5	Polytechnic 7s
-	5s	0	V	8	Polytechnic 6s
-	Vets	3	V	5	OWC Vets
-	U14s		V		
-	U13s	2	V	5	Mitcham Park Stripes
-	U10s		V		



This week's fixtures

League	1s	V	NO GAME
League	2s	V	Alleyn Old Boys 3s
League	3s	V	Actonians Association 5s
League	IBIS Eages 4s	V	4s
League	West Wickham 6s	V	5s
SAL Cup	6s	V	Old Parkonians 9s
League	U14s	V	Chertsey Town Juniors Blues
League	U13s	V	Elm Grove Colts
League	U10s	V	Claygate Royals Swans



Vets 3 v 5 OWC Vets

Saturday saw the annual Vets game against Old Westminster Citz take place at the Hood, although few would have expected the match to go ahead when they woke up in the morning. Relentless overnight rain would surely be too much for pitches not renowned for excellent drainage. But a pleasant surprise awaited the pitch inspectors – the Hood had held its own. Game on!

Old, returning faces greeted each other excitedly, as a more-youthful-than-average Merton squad of 15 faced up to Jim Perrins and his venerable OWC team. All that was left now to get things under way was the referee's whistle. But where on earth was he? Luke Newman – a man with a foot in each camp – gamely offered to stand in, but he was eventually spared as the tardy referee – donning an overcoat and no boots – arrived to get things going.

It's fair to say Merton were under the cosh in the opening quarter, as their defence-heavy squad offered little going forward, but plenty of resilience at the back and in midfield. Carl Philpot marshalled the troops well, while Jamie and Ty did their utmost to coerce the lads to keep the ball on the ground and play football. And there was due reward, as, somewhat against the run of play, a long ball was fired to Matt Haswell upfront. Having done well to (ostensibly) beat the offside trap, his left-footed finish was emphatic, leaving their keeper no chance. 1-0 to the hosts.

The advantage lasted all of about 4 seconds though, as OWC hit back with a scruffy goal that trickled in, following a failure on Merton's part to clear their lines, and a subsequent goalmouth scramble. 1-1. Merton then appeared to have at least maintained parity as the break approached, but a back pass from Kevin Wood sold Swanny short, and the OWC striker converted an easy finish to make it 2-1 at half time.

A few fresh legs were brought on after the interval, and the game was pretty even for the 10 minutes that followed. However, utter farce was to ensue. OWC's front line managed to get behind the defence on the right-hand side, and looked to be zero-ing in on goal. Kev attempted a last-ditch slide tackle, up-ending the OWC striker in the process - just outside the box.

Or so we all thought.



Vets 3 v 5 OWC Vets (cont)

Not only did the referee ignore the divots – nay, trenches – outside the area and point to the spot, he also brandished a RED card. No harm was done, and Toddy had been coming across as the last defender anyway. Utter madness, and 22 of the 23 people on the pitch were left perplexed.

“Stop making this all about you, ref!” raged an incandescent Spence.

“Please god, don’t send him off ref. We only get to play them once a year!” an incredulous Perrins – the opposing captain – begged.

Eventually, the ref saw a modicum of sense, reaching for a yellow instead. (Does that count as three yellows in one, then?). The penalty remained though, and Jim stepped up to put it away clinically in the bottom-left corner. 3-1, but at least we still had 11 v 11 in this enjoyable friendly.

And the injustice seemed to spur Merton on. They began to play their best football of the day, and created lots of chances. Steve Burchell had one audacious crack from the halfway line, and there were a couple of other much closer shaves. None, though, came closer than Ty. Having got the better of the defender, he found himself 10 yards out, with the out-of-position keeper leaving an open goal beckoning. Somehow, Ty contrived to hit the post and the danger was cleared. Incredible scenes, and delirium on the disbelieving bench.

Nevertheless, the setback was a brief one, as Merton managed to get a second goal, and shortly after, Kev went from villain to hero as he equalised with a crafty header from a corner. 3-3, and what a game!

The hosts continued to press, but unfortunately, a counter attack was their undoing, as OWC broke clear, and a thunderous left-footed finish from outside the box restored their lead. Four soon became five, as the Merton defence failed to mark their men at a corner, and a thumping header found the back of the net to make it 5-3.

The men in yellow never gave up, and still looked a threat in the final 10 minutes. However, they’d left themselves too much to do, and eventually the ref called time on what had been a thoroughly entertaining game, played in excellent spirit. As always. The bar was abuzz thereafter, with those threatening to only stay for one, staying for a few more than that. The camaraderie was as evident as ever, and a huge thank to Jim and the OWC lads for coming down. We look forward to a rematch, and many more laughs on Long Good Friday.



Vets 3 v 5 OWC Vets (cont)





Vets 3 v 5 OWC Vets (cont)





1s 3 – 1 EBOG

This was a cracking performance and win for our first team against a very good EBOG side who were unbeaten in the league so far and looking very likely to go back to the first division at the end of the season.

They started very slowly and we created some good opportunities and took the lead after about 15 mins. This was a deft Jimbo back heel from a Jonny cross. Soon after their left back decided to take the ball past George who took the ball off him and crossed for Jonny to score. Then just before half time we had a really good passing move down the left which seemed to have broken down and was half cleared to the other wing where Max fed Josh who finished decisively to make it an improbable 3-0. During the later stages of the first half EBOG had settled and played some good football carving a few good openings and missing them although I seem to recall that they got their taste for hitting the crossbar.

The second half got under way with EBOG scoring far too early for comfort and playing some good passing football. We defended resolutely, Scott and Browner at the heart of the defence with Max and Jordan doing well on the wings. EBOG created some great chances and were very unlucky and the crossbar came to our aid on at least three more occasions. But we carved out a terrific opportunity to make it four with a slick quick passing movement but Jonny shot narrowly wide. Isaac came on for Jordan with Vanny proving effective at full back and Isaac's fresh legs working some relief. And we held out.

This was a good all round team performance and everyone put in a good shift with Josh playing a captain's innings and being Man of the Match. In fairness you could make out a good case for almost all of our players.

EBOG looked a really good side and should in all probability be promoted at the end of the season. They were well organised and had three or four really good players who pulled the strings. They lacked a little bit of discipline but I understand their frustration as they did not have much luck all afternoon. The ref had a good game, it was not easy and gave them a good share of free kicks. But they got on his back and picked up a sin bin. Still a great result for Merton and a great team effort.

Team: Sherbs (GK), Jordan, Browner, Scott, Max, Josh (Capt), Jimbo, Joe, Vanny, Jonny, George Sub Isaac for Jordan .



1s 3 – 1 EBOG (cont)





1s 3 – 1 EBOG (cont)





2s 2 v 0 South Bank Reserves

NO REPORT



3s 0 v 3 Carshalton 4s

It was a miserable, rainy day perfect conditions for a derby game and we blew it. We lined up with Iain in goal, Nathan LB Mustard RB, Neal and Mike at CB, Sam S and Vin CM, Britney LM, Sam K RM with Aaron and Fitz up top.

A lot was spoken about tactics before the game but that all went out the window when a really poor defensive error by Mustard let them in for an easy chance to make it 1 - 0 to Carshalton. A simple cut back from the byline was slotted in and we'd gone behind early, AGAIN.

We had started trying to play football but were struggling to keep the ball during the first 15 mins and were 2 - 0 down before we got started. Poor marking from a corner left them with an extra man and he made no mistake smashing a decent half volley in the top corner. Jimmy came on for Fitz after 20 mins and made a difference but we were still chasing the game.

We managed to rally after that and started playing some good football without creating many clear cut chances. Then just before HT the ref (worst this season) decided to sin bin Sam S for 'harrassing' him (in my defence i've done worse this season and stayed on the pitch) HT 2-0.

So we kicked off the second half with 10 men and did well despite being a man down for the first 10 mins. We dominated the ball for long periods but still couldn't create much for the strikers. As we chased the game it became more and more open and they scored a terrible 3rd goal. A mistake from Neal gave them a chance to square it in the 6 yard box, the ball spun off Vin and nutmegged Iain for their third. Sums up our season so far really



4s 3 – 5 Poly 7s

NO REPORT



5s 0 – 8 Poly 6s

A message for the fans who tune in each week for a riveting read of action and analysis: please look away now.

As the scoreline suggests, it was a pretty miserable day for the 5s. We very much considered this game a punt where we wouldn't expect to get many points seeing as how they are top of the league and running away with it. Even so, the manner of the defeat was pretty poor. There was ample moaning, hands being thrown up in the air at various stages, and too many players giving up on the game.

The only thing to say really is that we have to put that behind us and continue the struggle for points against a good West Wickham side. Make no mistake, we are well and truly rooted into a relegation battle now.