

# The Merton Way



**2018 – 2019 season**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> February 2019**



## **CONTENTS**

- 1: Note from the Chairman
- 2: The Social Boar-terfly
- 3-4: This weeks and week before's results
- 5: Fixtures
- 6: Merton League form
- 7: 1s
- 8-12: 2s
- 13: 3s
- 14: 4s
- 15-18: 5s
- 18-24: 6s
- 25-31: U10s
- 32-33: Where are they now...Dan Wells



### Note from the Chairman



Sunday morning down at the Hood the Good and the Bad.

I went down to the Hood on Sunday morning (20th Jan) to watch our Under 14s. It was a cracking game and the lads had a terrific 2-1 win against a strong Leatherhead side. We are in a very tough league and this was a very well deserved and hard fought and surprisingly first win of the season. Both sides played some excellent football with high quality players and excellent organisation. It was a credit to youth football and Merton F. C. The youth section is thriving with much credit to Dan Woollard and the managers and coaches. They are also getting some good publicity with David Collier's goal from a free kick getting air time in National TV. On a bright morning it is well worth getting down to the Hood and supporting our lads.

But the most disappointing part of that Sunday morning was seeing the litter that we had left behind on Saturday afternoon from the adult matches. None worse than the rubbish by the mobile goals pitch where our 4s played our 5s. There was pink tape, yellow tape, plastic bottles etc etc. Please guys can we take a little more pride in our home ground. Surely we are better than that. So please don't leave your rubbish on the pitch; put it in the bin.

We also had to report the sad death of Niall Quinlan at the age of 54, a brother of Martin and one of the Quinlan dynasty, legend status at Merton. The father and three sons all played in the same team in a boxing day fixture.

On the pitch on the 19th/20th January the club had a good weekend with wins for the 2s away at South Bank 3-2, and the the 2s winning 6-0 with a hat trick from Glen Pitman and a MOM performance. The 4s beat the 5s 5-2 in a good game at the Hood. The 5s continued their run of playing some good football but getting no reward, Aaron Ackerman is doing a good job and the spirit and camaraderie seems excellent. The 6s lost at home to Old Salesians reserves. The bar was again buzzing after the games and then on Sunday three wins for the youth section'

The results were pretty good for the weekend of 26th/27th January but I experienced something completely different. I went with the 1s to Finchley where they suffered a 6-1 defeat. Old Finchleans is now a very nice club; two good pitches a nice clubhouse just refurbished after a flood and some good people running it and playing. Strangely at half time at 1-1 we had really come on strongly and I thought we had a good chance of 3pts. Sadly not to be!. Still in the evening I went to the Wimbledon West Ham cup game and stepped back in time to the Crazy Gang and crazy times.



## The Social Boar-terfly

**SUPER BOWL LIII**  
*IS COMING TO*



**MERTON FC**  
**Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> FEBRUARY**  
**PLUS - BBQ, DRINKS, FILMS & PROPER FOOTBALL:**  
**14:05 LEICESTER vs MAN UTD**  
**16:30 MAN CITY vs ARSENAL**

The time has come to book your place for Merton Super Bowl night on Sunday 3 Feb. A reminder that it's £15 all-you-can-eat buffet, including a free alcoholic beverage of your choice. Doors open at 2pm for the Super Sunday football, followed by classic films and then the main event.

**Food served from 4pm.** See attached the pictures of some of the incredible food you can expect.

Please transfer your £15 to the club account, and notify myself (Toddy) or Ryan Gresty once you have done so...

## Last week's results



League	Old Finchleian	6	V	1	1s
Pritchard					
League	2s	2	V	2	Norsemen
Ackerman, Quainton					
League	HSBC 3s	2	V	1	3s
Byrne					
CUP	Polytechnic 7s	3	V	1	4s
Englefield					
CUP	HSBC 5s	2	V	5	5s
Ackerman Perkins-2 Bitmead Issac					
League	6s	7	V	5	Old Wilsonians 9s
Golding-3 Riches-3 Emery					
League	Redhill Yth Athletic	2	V	4	U14s
League	U13s	2	V	5	Twickenham Tigers Black
League	U10s	2	V	3	FC Athena Whites
Faris Percy					

## 19-20 Jan results



League	1s		V		NO GAME
League	South Bank Cuaco	2	V	3	2s
					Ackerman, Quainton (2)
League	3s	6	V	0	Carshalton 4s
					Burchell R, Peace, Cross, Pitman (3)
League	4s	5	V	2	5s
					Zhurbiy (2), Englefield (2), Minkevich
					Bitmead, Josh
League	Old Salesians Res	5	V	3	6s
					Riches (2), Kelly
League	U14s	2	V	1	Leatherhead Swans
League	Rocks Lane Utd	1	V	5	U13s
					Stevie, Brandon, Thomas, Louis, Kymarnie
League	Spelthorne Sports Colts	1	V	3	U10s
					Rio (2), Faris

## This week's fixtures



League	Carshalton	V	1s
League	2s	V	Old Blues
League	3s	V	Old Wilsonians
League	4s	V	Ibis Eagles
-	5s	V	NO GAME
League	6s	V	City of London 3s
League	Sheen Lions	V	U14s
-	U13s	V	NO GAME
League	U10s	V	Claygate Royals Griffins



## Merton league form

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
MERTON 2	14	5	2	7	23	34	-11	17
MERTON 6	11	4	3	4	29	32	-3	15
MERTON 4	12	3	4	5	29	37	-8	13
MERTON 1	13	3	3	7	18	28	-10	12
MERTON 3	15	4	0	11	30	42	-12	12
MERTON 5	14	1	2	11	16	44	-28	5





## SENIOR DIVISION 2



POS		P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
1	Norsemen	11	11	0	0	38	11	27	33
2	East Barnet Old Grammarians	12	7	3	2	32	22	10	24
3	Bank of England	10	7	0	3	34	17	17	21
4	NUFC Oilers	13	5	4	4	23	19	4	19
5	Alexandra Park	14	5	3	6	30	29	1	18
6	Old Finchleians	10	5	2	3	28	19	9	17
7	Merton	13	3	3	7	18	28	-10	12
8	HSBC	12	3	2	7	15	36	-21	11
9	Carshalton	12	2	3	7	18	31	-13	9
10	Ibis Eagles	13	2	0	11	15	39	-24	6

## 2s 2 – 2 Norsemen Reserves



The word 'berserk' derives from a group of Scandinavian warriors – 'Berserkers' – who wore wolfskin, got themselves into the sort of furious mental overload only usually witnessed on Arsenal Fan TV, and went into battle all flailing limbs and swords, taking down everyone in sight until their inevitable death in what amounts to an even more ancient form of Hara-Kiri. It made sense, then, that Merton 2s' opposition, the hitherto unbeaten and admirably ball-on-the-ground Norsemen, spent 90 minutes in a relationship to "cool, calm and collected" akin to the one Denmark has with the planet Neptune: that is to say none whatsoever and most of a galaxy apart.

When the apparently blue boys in blue weren't screaming at each other, us, the referee, and whichever poor saps stumbled across their path, there was, in fact, a decent match taking place.

"They can only play direct," shouted one of the Norsemen, showcasing the way to his team's weakness.

"CALM DOWN AND KEEP YOUR HEAD ON," screamed another, centimetres from his face, in a manner anything but calming and including far more expletives.

There was a moment when the screaming, whinging and general grumbling stopped. It was the second or so Ackers' lobbed opener looped 30 yards through the air in an arc so perfect God looked down upon it and wondered whether he should just pack up and quit. It was assisted by cross-field fade Gresty absolutely 100% intended, a ball begging to be professionally dispatched over the despairing, but unusually quiet, 'keeper. It was the best surprise ball since Louis CK invited young female comedians into his dressing room.

Merton 2s harried and hustled, Ackers' was presented with another opportunity following good work from AJ but narrowly dragged wide. Ackerman's general hold-up play and quality would garner him man of the match ahead of the centre-midfield pairing of Big Scotty Scot and Ever-running Ever-ready Ryan Gresty who didn't give Norsemen a moment's peace all game.

Norsemen scored, a lovely goal that included some one-touch play and a smart finish. It whistled past debutant George who over the course of the match put in such a catlike performance that Pearcey spent most of the time in the changing room after stroking him behind the ears and talking to him in a baby voice.

## 2s 2 – 2 Norsemen Reserves



Despite Norsemen's quality, our heroes in yellow and black scored again. A long throw from Gresty, a flick from Ackers and DQ (putting in a Forest Gump performance: lots of running, often stupid) controlled with his head, rightly ignored the onrushing Ben Cook, and smashed the ball with such ferocity the only real surprise was the net stayed intact.

DQ was almost immediately given 15 mins rest to get over the excitement. AJ, up top in his place, skated through like Tonya Harding before the booze and leg-breaking and boxing and pornography, only to be denied by some excellent defending. Merton 2s were looking good but Norsemen's threat was ever-present. Soon after, Jack did his best impression of Del Boy falling through a bar, only the bar was there, and was a football, and said football hit his arm, and it was a penalty.

"I can't remember the last time the oppo missed against us. It never happens," remarked Willgo from the sidelines. "They just seem to have remarkably clear heads."

Berserkers to the last, the captain promptly missed the target altogether. Was it to be Merton's day?

No, no it was not, because a win might've seen the 2s threaten to move away from mid-table security and that simply isn't their way in 2018/19. Norsemen equalised, both teams pushed for a winner, one of the teams screamed more than the other, and a fair-ish 2-2 draw presented itself at the final whistle. An average single point return, but a match that wasn't anything but.

## 2s 3 – 2 South Bank Cuaco



Merton 2s, usually as steady on the road as Prince Phillip, nevertheless arrived in Dulwich with a full squad, full hearts, and, in Gibbo's case, a full belly.

Dan 'The Tinkerman' Rist, the Ole Gunnar Solskjær to Willgoss' Alex Ferguson, had ruminated long and hard over how to get the best out of his erratic team and ultimately decided on 4-3-1-2 - a narrow but attacking formation. Esoteric down to the last detail, Risty looked at the oldest person in the squad and said 'you run the channels all day long'. Top management. Much like Haydn on a night out, though, sometimes football's simply a numbers game. Merton 2s had tried many different formations this year in easing themselves to mid-table obscurity; but, finally, Risty stumbled across a winner.

How so? Well, partly it was aided by a less-than-impressive opposition. South Bank lacked a great deal of pace or finesse, although they did boast the sort of goalkeeper who gets snow on his hands when he does a star jump.

Early doors, then, and it's all Merton 2s. A four man midfield of Pritchard, Mario, The Great Scott and Everrunning Everyready Gresty controlled the game like Harold Shipman controlled patient numbers - efficiently. Chances were created and, with some predictability, DQ spurned the first because it was nowhere near his head, catching the 8ft goalie's heel with an attempted nutmeg that resulted in a corner. The chance had been created by Sutton's finest black cab filmmaker, Lewis Ackerman, who made like he does in the back of his fake taxi and promptly scored from two yards during a melee after another corner. "I like the easy ones," he said, and no-one knew whether he was referring to work or scoring goals.

DQ found himself in the once-always-and-now-increasingly-rare situation of being quicker than the entire opposition backline. Probably definitely onside, he promptly scored twice. The first saw a Pirlo-eque pass from Mario that had the Italian Galleon mamma-miaing in delight. Showing rare control and composure, DQ killed it and then dinked the world's tallest man. The second saw big Scotty eschew his left leg and instead cross with the outside of his right while running down the left channel. It sounds beautiful. It really wasn't. DQ scored from five yards while falling over.

And the chances continued, largely from Mario's top quality set pieces or the occasional sojourn down the right-hand side from Rat, taking a day's vacation in the 2s because he's a lovely man.

3-0 at half time and all was well. Special shout-out to Max, in goal, who kept a clean sheet and couldn't get the kit off quicker if he tried when handing over to Sam Pritchard for the second half.

## 2s 3 – 2 South Bank Cuaco



Half two, then, and all did not go well. Pritch admired a fairly smart volley so much he waved it in at the near post like Mr Tumble signing to a deaf child. He then decided to mix things up by perfecting the along-the-ground goal-kick into the centre of the pitch.

Risty Dan had a plan, though, and changed to 4-5-1 to stem the tide, which kind of worked because the second half was largely appalling. Pearcey and Haydn had more to do but stood fast at the back. Conor moaned and crunched into tackles, because that's what he does best. And Rat wondered just how bad 2s football could be. Willgoss, back from a lengthy lay-off, engaged in the odd enterprising run down the right and also Jackie Chan-ed a centreback in the head.

They scored again, mainly through Merton 2s being a bit pants by this point, but we still ended-up more than deserving winners.

And, thus, like the 19th president of the USA, a Mr Rutherford B. Hayes, Merton 2s' season continues to happen, but not in such a way that anyone's likely to remember it. A 3-2 win, if anyone's counting.



## INTERMEDIATE DIVISION 3



POS		P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
1	Broomfield 'A'	8	8	0	0	32	10	22	24
2	Alleyn Old Boys 3rd	12	8	0	4	40	29	11	24
3	Polytechnic 3rd	12	7	1	4	35	22	13	22
4	West Wickham 3rd	8	7	0	1	25	5	20	21
5	Norsemen Res	8	6	2	0	25	5	20	20
6	Merton Res	14	5	2	7	23	34	-11	17
7	Weirside Rangers Res	12	3	1	8	12	36	-24	10
8	Old Parkonians 3rd	7	3	0	4	13	12	1	9
9	HSBC Res	13	1	5	7	21	48	-27	8
10	Old Blues Res	9	2	1	6	14	25	-11	7
11	South Bank Cuaco Res	11	1	0	10	11	25	-14	3



### JUNIOR DIVISION 2 SOUTH



POS		P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
1	Civil Service 4th	12	10	0	2	38	19	19	30
2	Polytechnic 5th	11	8	1	2	35	23	12	25
3	Kew Association Res	14	7	3	4	39	39	0	24
4	Old Salesians	11	6	1	4	42	21	21	19
5	Actonians Association 6th	11	6	1	4	26	27	-1	19
6	HSBC 3rd	12	5	1	6	34	39	-5	16
7	Actonians Association 5th	12	4	3	5	20	19	1	15
8	Merton 3rd	15	4	0	11	30	42	-12	12
9	Old Wilsonians 3rd	11	3	2	6	26	26	0	11
10	Carshalton 4th	11	1	0	10	12	47	-35	3



#SALJ4S



## JUNIOR DIVISION 4 SOUTH



POS		P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
1	Polytechnic 6th	12	10	2	0	46	11	35	32
2	West Wickham 6th	14	7	1	6	31	36	-5	22
3	Polytechnic 7th	9	5	1	3	28	18	10	16
4	Actonians Association 7th	10	5	1	4	22	23	-1	16
5	Old Wilsonians 5th	10	4	2	4	25	25	0	14
6	Merton 4th	12	3	4	5	29	37	-8	13
7	Ibis Eagles 4th	9	3	1	5	16	19	-3	10
8	Merton 5th	14	1	2	11	16	44	-28	5



### 5s 5 – 2 HSBC



In regards to the Danny scale, things are looking very Dyer – I'd have it around 8.7. Although the 5s showed a battling spirit in the second half, the first half was so bad that we gave ourselves a mountain to climb. Credit to the 4s for what was a good game. To have any hope of staving off relegation we are likely to need a minimum of 5 wins from the last 7, having mustered 1 in the first 14 – and even that might not be enough. So the cup proves to be the last competition we really have to play for, and up this time was another team we are likely to be playing next year.

We arrived expecting a 1pm kick off, however the lack of an opponent and referee at what should have been the first whistle implied that we may have been misled. Half an hour later, they trundled out and the game began.

We received a very early warning sign that things might not completely go all our own way when, in the 1<sup>st</sup> minute, their beast of a centre forward sprinted clear of our defence onto a through ball. With all the time in the world he chipped it past Iain in goal, and it very slowly trickled on to the post. Lucky not to be one nil down.

Not long after that, we went ahead with a terrific goal. We won a free kick on the left and Ackers' eyes lit up like Augustus Gloop's in a chocolate factory; I have never seen him run so fast!! He managed to knock Bitmead out the way and swung a peach of a free kick into the roof of the net for 1-0.

We remained dominant, but took a while to fashion another good quality chance. It came in approx. the 30<sup>th</sup> minute from yet another set piece [5s, scoring set pieces? Can't be...]. The corner was swung in to Bitmead onto our recently not-so-prolific centre half Daz. It wasn't high enough for a third awkward Dab in a row, however he awkwardly stabbed it somewhere that was vaguely in the direction of goal. Luckily, it landed straight at Isaac's feet, who coolly swept it in at the far post. 2-0.

The talk at half time was largely "keep it going", and we actually did for a little while. We reasserted dominance after the break and went 3-0 up via an extremely route one goal. Iain in goal smashed it downhill beyond their defence, and Bitmead ran on to it. He easily held off their defender and chipped it past the goalkeeper for what was a very well taken goal. And 3 very quickly became 4 when Tom, in control of the ball high into their half, slipped the ball left to Marcus whose first time shot viciously curled into the corner at the near post to make it 4.

### 5s 5 – 2 HSBC



We had chances to make it 5, not least two in the same move when Dwanjie combined to miss two golden opportunities. The ball was played through to Dulanjie, who ran one on one with the keeper. He spread himself like a hooker for her [or his, in Tigsy's case] first of the day. D scuffed the effort a bit and confirmed after the game that it was the first time he had ever unsuccessfully got it up, and the ball ricochet off the legs of the keeper. Dwayne pounced on the rebound, and took a shot with his left. The gap he was aiming for was as large as the hooker for her [or his, in Tigsy's case] last of the day, but alas it trickled past the post.

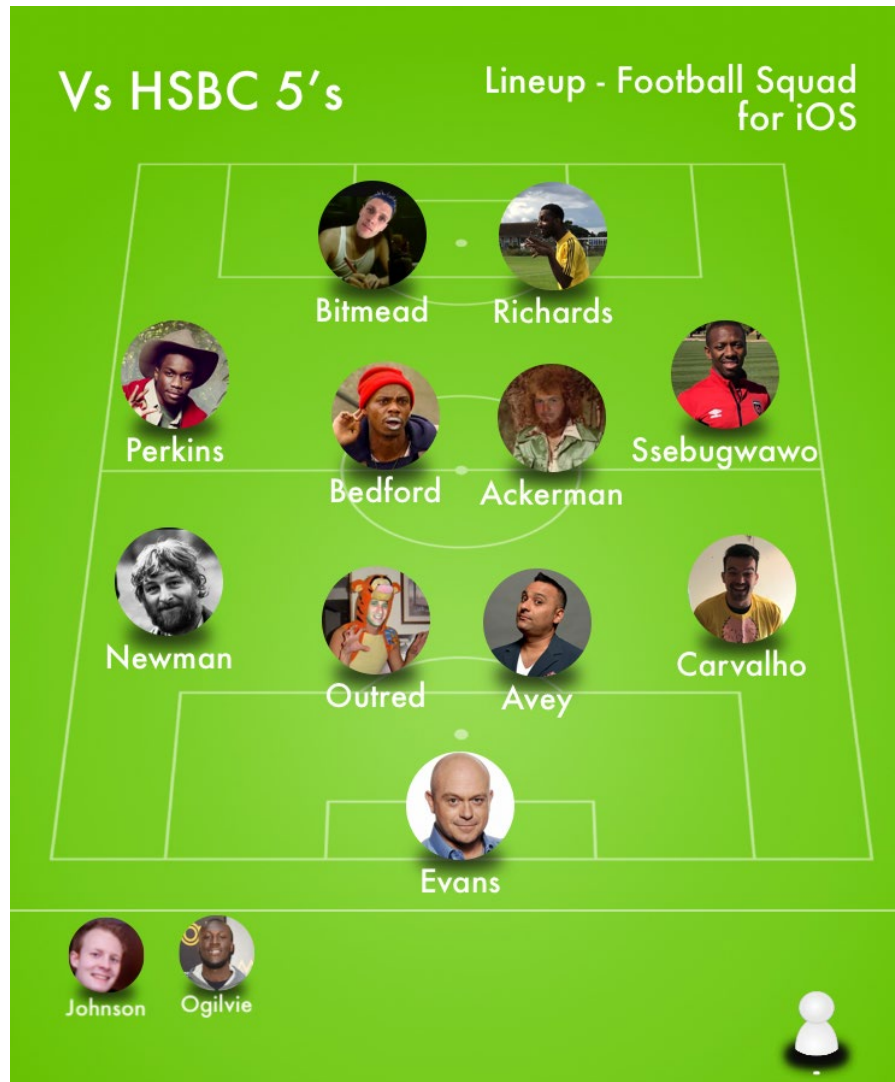
I'm not sure what changed, maybe we were getting complacent and throwing too many forward, or maybe it was just that they were throwing more forward, or a combination of both, but we lost control of the game with about 20-25 left. A corner was well dealt with initially, but we were slow to close down their player who picked up the ball on the edge of the box. He took a touch and stroked it towards the top corner, which Iain to his credit got close to, but it just beat him to make it 4-1.

They started having a few really good chances, and we were fortunate that they didn't score a second earlier. There were 2 or 3 times when they were making runs in between our full back and centre back, finding themselves one on one with Iain, but the big intimidating figure of a bald Northern man in goal stopping them in their tracks. Their second goal eventually came from this avenue, with the ball unfortunately megging Iain to make it 4-2.

Fortunately, they were committing so many men forward that we were bound to get a chance or two too. Tom went on a mazy run with the ball and was tackled, however the ball ricochets off him, the defender, then his face to roll through to Marcus. Marcus then beat the keeper, stopped the ball on the line and waiting for the last second before hitting it home. 5-2 and the game was over. Man of the match went to Dwayne who played very well covering in centre mid with lots of hard work in the middle allowing us to keep control of the game for large periods. Honourable mentions go to the goalscorers Marcus, Isaac, Bitmead and Ackers for superb goals that all played a role in winning us the game, as well as Tom for assisting two, and Darren and Iain for a couple of unlikely assists.

Our semi-final will be against Poly 7s on 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb which will be a difficult game but we will believe we can win it. Next up in the league is another must-win against Old Wilsonians 5s.

5s





#SALJ4S



# JUNIOR DIVISION 4 SOUTH



POS		P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
1	Polytechnic 6th	12	10	2	0	46	11	35	32
2	West Wickham 6th	14	7	1	6	31	36	-5	22
3	Polytechnic 7th	9	5	1	3	28	18	10	16
4	Actonians Association 7th	10	5	1	4	22	23	-1	16
5	Old Wilsonians 5th	10	4	2	4	25	25	0	14
6	Merton 4th	12	3	4	5	29	37	-8	13
7	Ibis Eagles 4th	9	3	1	5	16	19	-3	10
8	Merton 5th	14	1	2	11	16	44	-28	5



### 6s 7 – 5 Old Wilsonians 9s

Today's game will be Merton 6s v Old Wilsons 9s v The Pitch!

After an unsettled weather pattern and a cold start, the pitch was thawing out to be tad bit heavy. Even before the game started, you could see the middle areas cutting up pretty bad, so this made for an interesting leveller between M6s being physical and OW9s being quick (and very young!!)

After a very lethargic warm up for the 6s, the game got underway with OW9s having first kick of the game, straight from the off, the pitch wasn't allowing for any quick turns and forced the opening to be played in direct lines of play

After a minor scare in defence for Merton, first blood is drawn when Lewis is freed on goal for a 1v1 and manages to slot neatly passed the keeper from 16 yards. This is soon followed up by James being flicked through for another 1v1, the first shot being parried by the keeper, which James had to check back to gather the ball and roll into an empty net as the OW9s tried to regroup

2-0 and seemingly cruising, OW9s countered and worked the ball down the 6s left, into the area with simple side steps around the on coming slide tackles, the cross is met with a looping header over the out stretched arms of MQ to pull the game back to 2-1

Not even halfway through the first half and the pitch is already getting heavy, once anyone is committed to a tackle, it's a simple 50/50 if you get clattered or able to step aside! The game starts to get very gritty, with fouls now going either way due to the rash sliding around. The physical side of the 6s is on top as the young OW9s can't quite get to grips with using their speed and footwork

6s now imposing their game, see's DG receive the ball just inside the area, with a quick turn and move (for such a lump) El'cappo shot is placed away from the keeper to restore the 2 goal lead and a 3-1 score line

OW9s now looking a bit out of sorts are being run ragged by Merton's front 3, twice Lewis and DG beat the keeper to great through balls, only for the both of them to go for goal instead of rolling the ball back for the better shot by a team mate, Steve H on the right pulls a great cross back to DG on the edge of the area, only for the shot to go inches wide

The pressure pays off with corners, James now swinging them in on the right finds DG in the centre who wins the header, the keeper does well to get to, but the follow up is slammed into the roof by the captain, for his 2<sup>nd</sup> on the day and to increase the lead to 4-1.

OW9s rally and bring themselves back into the game, once again, the young squad put together some neat football and march straight through the back line of Merton and slot the ball passed MQ, 4-2 and the signs are creeping in that mobility within 6s back line is becoming limited



### 6s 7 – 5 Old Wilsonians 9s

Still time for another attack, this time by Merton, Lewis is freed by some good inter play from the front 3, with options in, he works his way around and powers a shot past the stranded keeper and a half time lead of 5-2

Not much to say at half time and with limited options to change things, its much the same for the second half. However, with the pitch chopped to pieces from the first half play being manly in the OWs half, this now plays into the away team's hands. The youthful squad are now able to string a few passes around, leaving the 6s at a stand still in the mud and helpless to even get a tackle off. Time and time again OWs waltz around the 6s who are now struggling to keep upright, the pressure pays off as OW9s pull a goal back with a mazy run from inside their own half, skipping the challenges and dropping the shoulder, MQ is powerless as the ball nestles in the corner from a well-placed shot, 5-3

Nightmare 10 minutes to follow and many DOTD rewards to be thought about. First up, Joe! A up and under ball gives Joe all the time in the work to either control and clear, head or just get rid, sees him routed to the spot, not moving an inch as the OW9s forward strolls in, takes the ball and leave MQ helpless. 5-4

Similarly... and not to long after Joes debacle, MQ (for once) comes tearing off his line, bellowing 'Keepers Ball'.. only for (on loan) Tom to decide that, that's not good enough, and attempts to clear the danger, resulting in the pair, comically colliding without even touching the ball!!! A gift that OWs wasn't going to turn down as the ball is rolled into an empty net!! Talk about master of your own undoing... 5-5

Time running out, a bit of luck is needed. This is in the form of 'Lofty', still battling in midfield, he wins a good 50/50, the ball over the top frees up Lewis to skin the full and centre back, keeper comes out late as Lewis places a hard shot towards the corner, the keeper gets a glove on it, but the power takes the ball goal bound for his second hattrick for the 6s and lead restored. 6-5

The goal seem to break the OW's and the luck swings Merton's way, OW9s chasing the game are exposed at the back, DG receives the ball and carries it forward, Lewis times his run well as DG flicks the ball over the defender, in turn, Lewis spots James making a late run in behind the full back, the play is complete as James sweat scissor volley from 14 yards or so is destined for the top corner, but somehow the keeper reads the flight and turns the shot around for a corner. Best move and save of the game

The resulting corner sees James once again pick out DG at the far post, still with a lot of ground to make up, beats his marker and launches a diving header which gives the keeper no chance as the ball tucks inside the post for his first hattrick for the 6s and a 7-5 lead.

## **6s 7 – 5 Old Wilsonians 9s**



With minutes to go, the pitch absolutely smashed and cut to pieces, it all finishes. A 12 goal thriller, which OW9s done back in the game, be it by the mercy of the 6s attempt to shot themselves in both feet, the visitors just run out luck at the wrong time, the 6s however, must learn to stay switched on for the whole game, far to often the second half has been there undoing.

The result pushes the 6s into 3<sup>rd</sup>, having played a game more than the teams below them, one which will be next weeks oppo, as we welcome City 3s to the hood, if the pitch can recover in time!

MOTM: El Cappa (DG) with his first hattrick as wells as 3 assists

DOTD: Close one between a number of players for the second half collapse, not to name names (as it will take too long!), but Joe for static defending (which was quite comical!) takes the award

Team: There was only one in the first half, unfortunately they left at half time and was replaced with some mad hatters!!

### 6s 3 - 5 Old Salesians Reserves



With the manager back from a winter scouting trip in the alps, just in time for the 6s first home game in 2019. Mix start to the new year, with a loss and a win so far. Today's test will be stern, with OSR fielding a very youthful, good passing team.

The 6s struggling with a few knocks and injuries, no Joe with a foot injury, Daban out with a knee injury, No Ty or Steve B means 6s are down to the bones. Niall K and Sam S answer the call and step in to help out

MQ in goal, and a back four of Kev, Tom, Mark, Steve H, midfield 3 of Phil, David and Ricky, leaving a forward line of Andy, Lewis and James E.

Game away with an early exchange, honours even for the opening 10 or so minutes, the pass and move of OSR is matched with a lot of aggression of the 6s, a few soft freekicks set the tone and the ref needs to speak to a few players.

First blood to OSR when a melee in the box results in Phil sliding to block a shot, the resulting rebound is then blasted at point blank range into the arm and a shouts for a penalty ensue, Ref has no doubt, even under protest that it's a Pen, which is dispatched with MQ stranded on the line.

Rattled, 6s begin to put some passes together, however are open to the counter, OSR play some neat football, with pass and move through the middle and draw in the niggling fouls which breaks up the game. Making some headway, Lewis and David are both unlucky with shots from distant, but its still OSR that look the more threatening. In a break of play, Niall comes on for Phil whose struggling with a groin injury

OSR wins the ball outside there 18 yard, the exchange of passes bring them with in shooting range, a sideways pass sees a first time shot from 20 yards sail into the top corner, MQ had no chance.. 0-2

30 minutes gone and backs against the wall, the introduction of Niall brings some great long balls to the forward line, 6s are now making a bit of headway until Andy is judged to have given away a foul. Protesting his innocence only results in the ref sin binning for 10 minutes. OSR capitalise on this a stretch the score line further to 0-3 before halftime

Half time talk is a bit colourful, a change of Steve H for Sam S, sees Ricky drop back into right back, Sam slots into midfield with Niall, David now has the holding roll to go man to man.

The change up works well, Sam from KO takes the ball and slips pass 2 players, looking though he lost control, somehow drags the ball back and passes a further 2 players, now over stretching with his back to the goal, somehow regains control and slots james in for a 1v1 which ends just wide of the goal. DG snuffing out the link between the CAM and forward (and given away a few free kicks for being over enthusiastic with the tackles), Ricky at right back does his part, winning the 50/50s and playing out for the counter attack.



## The Merton Way – Page 23

### 6s 3 - 5 Old Salesians Reserves



Finally the 6s are able to play the ball around, Ricky and Andrew down the right flank, bring in Lewis. The cross is deflected and Lewis is there to nod in from close range, 1-3. A further change is needed, El cappo is blowing and makes way for Phil. Tails up, tackles in, bossing the game for the first time. Still end to end, but the 6s are clearly on top. Nails pulling the strings in the middle and Sam's looking dangerous when on the ball, it's like its glued to his foot!

Winning the battle in the middle is the key, Niall is feed the ball and he makes his way forward, the racking cross balls have been doing the damage, but this time from 35 yards (or so!) he unleash a left foot drive that catches the keeper flat footed and only able to watch as the ball sails top corner for goal of the day and brings the fight to 2-3.

Still 20 minutes to go, 6s forced once again into another change, Ricky now is struggling with a hamstring, and Steve H is back on.

The game is now even, OSR are fighting their way back into the game, however, it's a freekick to the 6s on their own 18 yard line, that shifts the power back to the oppo. Mark over passing the ball to a tired Kev, se'se the ball returned with interest and punished in the worse way, a few quick passes see MQ 1v1 and the scores increase to 2- 4. This takes the wind out the sails, Kev now struggling, swaps with DG, the changes are taking the toll as the formation is now suffering and OSR sucker punch the 6s and extend the lead 2-5.

Clock ticking down, 5 minutes to go, Niall is now in a heap in the corner with Cramp, removed from the game, Kev has to come back on and go up front. Phil now drops in a centre back, chappel left back, DG somewhere in the middle... it's a bit of a miss mash affier. Still, with the confusion, Kev somehow finds a third wind and has a jolly up and finds himself in the box, takes the shot that the keeper pares, gets to the rebound which looks clearly over the line and is cleared by the defender, Ref waves play on, James manages to cross the ball back in to lewis who slots pass the stranded keeper and defender on the line, 3-5... and the final kick of the game

Not a pretty game, but the woeful first half was the undoing of the 6s, coupled with the forced changes in the second half, Old Sal's Res are worthy winners in the end, with some really good pass and move football

MOTM: A close vote with 4 people all on 1 vote and Ricky winging it as his now off to have a knee op and will be out for eh season, hoping he will make a full recovery and able to re-join us next season

DOTD: Although no one was nominated, it could have been Dobby for the sin bin, Chapple for the odd freekick pass to Kev, Phil for the pen! DG for saying at half time to stop giving away pointless free kicks and arguing with the ref... only to give away 2 free kicks and argue the with the ref in the opening minutes of the second half! Kev, for not running quick enough, MQ for the near post goal.. again, Chappell again for arguing with the ref about yellow cards and sin bins! Niall for asking if anyone has salt while in agony with cramp (everyone knows you only bring pepper to a game!!), and Daban for having a car that breaks down !!!!



## JUNIOR DIVISION 6 SOUTH



POS		P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
1	HSBC 6th	10	9	1	0	62	15	47	28
2	South Bank Cuaco 7th	11	7	2	2	35	31	4	23
3	Merton 6th	11	4	3	4	29	32	-3	15
4	Bank of England 5th	10	4	3	3	21	26	-5	15
5	City of London 3rd	10	3	4	3	31	19	12	13
6	Old Salesians Res	7	4	0	3	20	13	7	12
7	Old Wilsonians 8th	11	3	3	5	23	32	-9	12
8	Civil Service 8th	10	2	1	7	16	24	-8	7
9	Old Wilsonians 9th	12	0	3	9	19	64	-45	3

## **U10s 2 – 3 FC Athena**



It was a bright, crisp and sunny Sunday morning at Joseph Hood Rec. A day when you can drive your car and justifiably wear your sunglasses because of the sun's brightness. Once you step outside, it's a slightly different story as the biting wind reminds you that this is still a British winter's day and if you are not careful you could be punished for your overly optimistic assessment of the weather.

Today's opponents, were FC Athena and presumably named after the Greek Goddess for wisdom and warfare. Hopefully warfare would not be necessary, Merton are a family focused club and I am sure that the Surrey Youth League would take a dim view of 'warfare' during matches. It is not conducive to player development.

The first half commenced with Merton playing right to left.

During the first few minutes both sides were finding their feet on the muddy pitch.

Both Merton and FC Athena started moves that broke down in the midfield. This was entirely understandable because the middle of the pitch was very muddy and heavy going.

After 4 minutes, FC Athena had the first corner of the match.

After 5 minutes, Max was called upon to make a double save as Athena were starting to have more possession and work the ball more effectively.

Six, minutes gone, another corner for FC Athena, they were now knocking at the door.

7 minutes gone, Merton were coming more into the game. A good challenge by Harry and forward run was followed by a Percy run down the left. This was more promising for Merton.

8 minutes in, an Athena attack breaks down as Ollie won possession and is then fouled. Merton free kick.

11 mins into the game, Faris has Merton's first shot of the game. It's on target but straight at the keeper. Their keeper gratefully collects and rolls out to his defender.

### U10s 2 – 3 FC Athena



One minute later, a similar scenario with a different outcome. Faris shoots, the keeper manages to get to it but is unable to prevent it trickling over the line. 1 nil to Merton

14 mins, another Faris shot - cleared by Athena.

15 mins, a Maxwell shot hits the post.

17 mins gone, Athena on the offensive; good approach work by them followed by a sharp shot. Max makes a good save.

With 18 minutes gone, their efforts are rewarded. After a breakdown in play in the midfield, Athena advance on the Merton goal and their striker shoots into the top right corner of the Merton goal. Max was unable to get to it. Goal to FC Athena. 1 all.

Attempted through balls from both Merton and Athena were not reaching their intended target because they were getting stuck in the mud. It was difficult to dribble, because of the mud. Merton's trademark 'pass and move' football was difficult to execute...because of the mud.

With 19 minutes played, after an attempted Merton clearance failed, Athena were able to capitalise. When it came, their shot was to the bottom right of Max's goal. It went in. 1-2 to FC Athena

Encouraged by coach Neal and watching parents, Merton kept their heads up and attempted to get back on level terms.

With 24 minutes played, the ball reached Maxwell on the left midway in his own half. He set off on a run and drifted past three Athena players before arriving in the Athena penalty area and unleashing a thunderbolt shot that went just wide of the right-hand post. Close!

Moments later the referee blew for half time. Still 1-2 to FC Athena.

The second half started with Merton kicking left to right and uphill.

After 2 minutes, Percy was able to get a shot away after some good Merton pressure. His shot was saved.

### U10s 2 – 3 FC Athena



After 4 mins, the match ball was so covered in mud that it had to be replaced. It's not often that the match ball gets subbed off, but it happened today.

5 minutes in, after a turnover of possession, a fast break for Athena results in a low shot that hits Merton's right-hand post. Athena are first to the loose ball and shoot again. Max makes another good save.

Bobby, Percy and Louis were working hard in midfield. It was not easy for them because of the mud. Both teams had to contend with the same conditions of course. If there was a difference between approaches it was that Merton stuck to their footballing principles and always played out from the back always whereas Athena were more pragmatic. They were more willing to kick the ball long from their goalkeeper and try to build attacks from further up field. To be fair, they did also play out from the back.

Ollie and Harry had the difficult task of receiving the ball under pressure and then trying to find a good outlet pass each time. They did well in the conditions. Rio was also making his presence felt and a solid contribution to the team.

10 minutes played, Bobby had a shot that was saved.

14 minutes gone, Merton win a free kick. Bobby takes it and his shot is blocked. The ball came to Maxwell who shot and hit the post.

After 15 minutes, after advancing on goal Percy shoots to the right- hand side of Athena goal. The bounce of the shot fools the goalkeeper and it is in! 2 all. Merton had worked hard to get back on level terms and their efforts had been rewarded. A draw would have been a fair result, but it wasn't to be today.

After a few more chances for either side, Athena came away with the winner and all the points when their 24<sup>th</sup> minute shot trickled over the line to the bottom left of Max's goal. 2-3 to Athena

Football can be cruel sometimes. Shortly after the re-start the referee blew the final whistle. Unlucky boys! Special shout-out to Joe and David who were both unable to play today.

Author: Mike Pitt

Video credit: Scott Dowsett

U10s 2 – 3 FC Athena



## **U10s 3 – 1 Spelthorne Colts**



A crisp, sunny morning greeted our team as they almost all drove straight past the correct turning and then did a tour of the local area to find their way back. Satnavs were roundly blamed. Another innovative warm-up with Neal and Roy prepared the group who were today missing the power-houses of Maxwell and David. Anyone who had parked a car behind the goal was relieved.

Merton made a strong start and won an early corner through the pace of Louis and Farris. They took it short between them and worked the ball across the box but Farris could not quite get his shot off.

They continued steadily for 10 minutes. Neal was demanding more pace and urgency on the side-lines. He knew the boys had more to give.

There followed some nice quality passing play from the cultured opposition who had a couple of players showing great comfort over the ball. Our boys were not quite finding their final pass. Max was also forced into a couple of blocks from good passing moves.

Then the ball was won on the right by the effervescent Ollie, who was once again giving 100% at the back. He found Louis who put Rio through on goal for a solid finish in the bottom left corner of the goal and 1-0.

From the kick off there followed another 2 shots. Louis first and then the ball came out and Bobby played in Percy for a shot wide. Merton were responding to Neal's calls from the side.

Farris now made a lovely jinking run and was tripped at pace on the edge of the box. Bobby squared up to the ball, took a run and struck the ball sweetly. It crashed off the bar and away from the Spelthorne goal.

Now Rio broke on another through ball and suddenly it was 2-0. This felt no more than the boys deserved.

In search of more Louis now won the ball in midfield and passed to Farris who found Rio in a one on one with the Spelthorne keeper but he was tackled by a retreating defender as he was about to shoot.

Harry, who was his composed self throughout was suddenly off the pitch with some unexpected breathing issues. This clearly concerned his dad, Dan, who ran back from seeing him saying "he must be struggling to carry all that hair around. I tried to get him to have it cut." There is no love like a man has for his son.



## **U10s 3 – 1 Spelthorne Colts**



Half time came and it was 2-0, Merton deserving their lead after bossing numerous phases of play despite a well drilled and silky opposition.

The second half kicked off and Spelthorne were working extremely hard to close their deficit. Their manager was offering plenty of positive encouragement from the side-lines and deserved plenty of credit for the quality of their play. This looked like the smallest side Merton had faced of late but possibly one of the best passing sides at the same time with players who knew how to shield the ball.

They created two chances in quick succession but both through balls were a touch heavy and found the grateful gloves of Max, who had been busy without having to over-stretch himself.

Harry was breaking up play as he does so well and Joe was working his socks off at the back alongside him in this phase of the game.

Next Ollie found Louis who played in Bobby but the ball ran too long and went out. Bobby was clearly comfortable playing in any position on the park. Another good passing move by Merton flowed across the Spelthorne box and Percy had his shot blocked for a corner. Nothing came of it again.

Spelthorne made a nice break and crossed the ball to create a powerful headed chance which sailed over the bar. Merton were now getting a little ragged and causing as many problems for themselves as their opposition.

Neal was asking for more forward play and we needed to avoid self-inflicted wounds.

Then, suddenly it was 2-1. Another moment of disjointed play deep in their own half led to Merton giving away the ball and it was eventually worked to a Spelthorne forward who squeezed it in at the far post.

Merton picked up their pace now and had a spell of pressure and kept going forward. Farris played in Bobby. The Spelthorne keeper managed to stop it and then Farris had a pot shot which inexplicably crept under the keeper and in for 3-1, triggering a wave of relief on the side-lines. The game looked won.



## **U10s 3 – 1 Spelthorne Colts**



Percy continued to work as hard as anyone in the middle of the park and made a powerful run and won a corner. Nothing came of it again but Merton were strong in this final phase of the game. Joe's game had settled well in the second half and he was playing some nice passes with his team-mates on the left now to get the ball forward.

The final whistle blew and it was a hard fought 3-1 win for Merton. That's 2 wins from 3 at this new league level.

Rio was awarded a deserved man of the match trophy and the gang took in the final words from Neal and Roy ahead of a dash to the cars for their lunch-time jaunt home.





### Where are they now... Dan Wells

Dan joined the club in the late 1990's and after playing in the lower teams for a few seasons broke into the first team in 1999 as a left back. Lofty was captain and he and I managed the side together. Dan's best position was probably left wing back but happily slotted in at left back. He was good on the ball with a sweet left foot. He was a very good team player, good in the dressing room and as ever a great turn of phrase.

Memorable moments. I remember Dan scoring some important goals. The first at Brentham beating about five players (It may have been the same bloke five times as Dan wasn't the quickest) and tucking it away with his right foot. He also scored the late equaliser at Old Westminster Citizens in a 1-1 draw with a free kick from just inside our half. Danny will no doubt recall it as a rocket but it bobbed along the ground and eventually bobbed over the keeper who had dived a few minutes too early.



Also we played a strong Old Parmiterians side in the Cup miles away. We were abject and lost 7-0. Danny sat down after the game and delivered a heart felt apology to me for the miserable team performance.

Danny had the unnerving habit of dislocating his knee caps and that led to his early retirement although he did make a come back as a goalkeeper. The pink Jersey (no 33) is his legacy there.

His last appearance was on tour where he controversially brought his girl friend (significantly strengthening our Karaoke team). We were holding on to a slender lead with a few minutes to go when Danny came on. With the specific instruction 'Don't get sent off' and after two minutes on the pitch he got sent off (captured on film,) We held on..... just and won the trophy!!!!





## Where are they now... Dan Wells



Now Danny is an accountant with the Battersea redevelopment project. He lives in Wandsworth with Denise, the karaoke Queen of the Algarve, and is not difficult to find as he generally can be located on a Wednesday evening in Hemmingways in the Village organising 'Open Mic nights'

Legacy to Merton F C a much more competent and serious team in a Karaoke bar!! Some lifelong friendships with his erstwhile team mates. Godfather to Sherbs's son Charlie.

*Dan's comments... The greatest thing about Merton FC for me was its ability to bring people from all walks of life together to work and play together in a team. Through good times, strange times, difficult times in my life it was very much a constant. The people the sense of humour, empathy and support networks it created help me grow. I wish I could still play still get caned by changing room banter, pretend to be a massive lad, still look forward to buying my new boots each season. Max not a bad piece of journalism but you missed out my, my penalty missing feats 2 out of 5 scored I believe, and my managerial Career at Merton, undefeated Caretaker manager of the reserve team (which did include two 4 all rollercoasters) and my title winning 3<sup>rd</sup> team managerial stint. See you all Wednesdays in Hemingways from 9pm. Open to team Management offers.*

