



THAT'S THE MERTON WAY

The Official Newsletter
of Merton Football Club

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The season so far

The main issue that we have had to deal with this season is the number of members that we have and who are available to play each weekend. In theory we have enough members for six teams, but up until now we have not had enough who are regularly available to field that number.

This has caused us to cancel a number of games and understandably because we have had to follow the SAL rules we have to cancel from the bottom up with priority for cup games, this has caused some disappointment in the club.

In order to deal with this we made an application to the SAL management committee for permission to drop one of the teams from the middle of the club. We made a detailed case as to why this was appropriate as a temporary measure this season but it was rejected. As I write this note, we are planning to field six teams this week.

In the short term we are making concerted efforts to recruit new players and all members should seek out work colleagues and friends to interest them in joining us. This summer we will run a major recruitment drive at local colleges and work places. In the longer term our thriving youth section will serve as an important feeder for the adult club. We are very keen to maintain our overall playing strength of at least six adult teams.

On the pitch the **1s have made a good start** to their season back in the top SAL division having played 8 games Won 2 lost 2 and drawn 4, giving them 10 pts after 8 games. **The 2s made an okay start with a few strong wins**, then hit a bad run. They have emerged from that and hopefully **can start to climb the table**.

The **3s are being led by Tony Postlethwaite** and is where last year's U16s have settled. This is an important pilot scheme for us with the reduced U21 membership package. **The team is holding its own with some good results, as are the 4s**, but like the 4s have been the most badly affected by the availability issues. **The 5s have a very strong camaraderie** but have found their division tough going. They **showed great support for the club** and the SAL when they travelled across London to fulfil the 4s' cup fixture. **The 6s had a good win last week**. They are now up and running.

Off the pitch we have achieved quite a lot. We have updated our website and Matt Haswell does a great job updating it with reports articles and pictures. **He just needs more of them**. Please contribute with match reports and pictures.

The bar is flourishing and we have moved for Sky TV so that we can screen live Premier League matches on Saturday and encourage people to stay in the bar. This was in part-funded by a very successful 'Italian Night' where Marcello (U8s



manager) and his business partner Dave did a great job with Italian cuisine supported by Peter and Jasper behind the bar.

We are building for the future. We are continuing to progress plans for a new ground and have approached the Council for discussions about Jo Hood and consent to do our own renovations on the clubhouse and changing rooms.

Our main priority this season is recruitment of players and helpers. Raising funds and discipline remain high on our list. On the pitch it is always nice to win something more than just a game.

We remain very grateful for the help given to the club by all the club officials, team managers and their captains. Also to the catering staff and bar staff who all do such a good job. Thanks to all the committee members who help keep us moving forward and Happy Christmas to you all.

Max Herbert, chairman

Youth section update

We thought it would be a difficult start to the season after the departures of the U15s and some U11s, but in fact it has been a lot better.

Steve Dewsbury has worked incredibly hard to fill the gaps, and has recruited some excellent managers, players and parents who support their children and the club. We have established a firm base for the expansion of a thriving youth section.

It remains our ambition in the next two or three years, to field youth teams on a Sunday

morning playing their home games at the Hood in the all-yellow Merton strip from U8s through to U16s (nine teams). Next season we hope to have six teams: U8s, U9s, U10s, U11s, U12s and U13s.

The youth section is now Charter Standard with all teams having at least one FA qualified coach, two certificated first aiders and of course Steve Dewsbury is the overall Child Welfare Officer. All the teams play in the Surrey Youth League. On a Sunday morning the league has approximately 9,000 young footballers playing across London.

Marcello and Tony manage our U8s and the team has made an excellent start to the season. Their excellent results have already caused them to be moved to a higher division where they are holding their own and enjoying the challenge.

Howard and Michelle run our Under 11s, and have really got them going this season. They have made a strong start in the league and have had a good cup run. ☺



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The U12s have now settled down with terrific team spirit but have gone down on four or five occasions by the odd goal in spite of some strong performances. The results are starting to come and I know that Steve and the boys are looking forward to the second half of the season. ☺

We are all extremely grateful for all the hard work put in by all the managers, coaches and supporters and it is so good to see so many parents supporting their children on a Sunday morning and supporting the club functions.

To the rest of the club: get yourself down to the Hood on a Sunday morning and watch the youth teams play – it is an uplifting experience.

Max Herbert, chairman

That's the Merton Calendar

Dec 20th – Youth Christmas Party

Dec 27th – Traditional match versus Old Ruts (away). Support welcome

Jan 1st – New Year's Day (Club Match + Sky Match: Stoke City v Manchester United, 12.45pm)

Jan 24th – Quiz night + Raffle (TBC)

April 3rd – Long Good Friday (Matches + Bar = TV Football)

May 30th – Bar opens for FA Cup final day

June 6th – Champions League Final (Derby day)



Champagne moment

A momentous occasion in early December as Old Wilsonians' Bruce Graham played his 1,000th game for his club against Merton's 6th Team. Club president Terry Baker did the honours and presented Bruce with a bottle of champagne before kick-off.



The boot room

Mackenzie has made his own bid to appear on the next season of *The Apprentice* (albeit he's better dressed and has a higher IQ) with his post-match boot cleaning service. Avoid the shame of a fine the following week and hand your boots over to Kenz as you make your way to the changing room. He charges £1 a pair. #value

Discipline

On the face of it, our disciplinary record does not look too good. We have now reached level one of the AFA code. Therefore we as a club – and you as players – are under the microscope.

If our record does not improve and we carry on picking up more disciplinary points from the AFA we could find ourselves before their d/c panel, fined heavily, with the possibility of being excluded from cup competitions next season.

As a club we must look of ways of improving our overall attitude towards match officials and opposition players. So far, we have had 25 yellow cards, four red cards and two misconduct charges (still to be dealt with by the AFA).

As well as players receiving suspensions from the AFA, the club have had to suspend 6 players so far. The breakdown of offences is as follows: 1st team: 5 yellows (16.1%); 2nd team: 8 yellows (25.8%); 3rd team: 6 yellows, 4 reds (38.7 %); 4th team: 2 yellows (6.5%); 5th team: 4 yellows (12.9%); 6th team: n/a.

As well as players receiving suspensions from the AFA, the club have had to suspend six players so far. We take no pleasure in taking this action because we are in effect punishing ourselves. However, we feel that this action had to be taken.

We really hope that the second half of the season will show a huge improvement in discipline & we can move forward as a club.

It is up to each individual to conduct themselves in a respectful and sporting manner. Respect the laws of our game, respect the match officials, respect the opposition, respect your teammates.

Roger Asling, disciplinary office

New website

If you haven't already, check out mertonfc.co.uk to see the club's new website. It's regularly updated with club news, events and important things such as the race for the Merton Golden Boot and the Merton Golden Gloves. Talking of which...

Club clean sheets

Points awarded for clean sheets, penalties saved and goals scored.

1. Angus Lees	14 points
2. Arturs Ivanovs	9 points
3. Alex Herbert	6 points
4. Mark Chappell	2 points
5. Ryan Tomlin	2 points
6. Martin Quinlan	1 point

Club top scorers

Goals scored only. No points awarded for handsomeness.

1. Will Taylor (Team Handsome)	11
2. Lewis Ackerman (1st Team)	8
3. Jason Thomas (Team Handsome)	7
4. Ivan Gladkow (Used to be Handsome)	6
5. Dulanie Richards (5th Team)	5
=5. Chris Rayner (Team Handsome)	5
7. Femi Arogundade (Team Handsome)	4
=7. Matt Boshier (1st Team)	4
=7. Ciaran Moorhouse (3rd Team)	4



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