

# THE MERTON WAY

MERTON FOOTBALL CLUB ISSUE 4 – 02.10.2015



# CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

## WE'LL BE ALRIGHT ON THE NIGHT

With the season underway we have not made a great start on the pitch. We have not had much luck with any of our teams. We have a lot of injuries at the top of the club and this has weakened us all the way down but we have the strength and talent to turn it round and all teams to be competitive in their divisions.

It is sad to report that we are better off than a lot of other clubs in the SAL who are struggling with their facilities and players. Old Westminster Citizens and Old Salesians have both lost their grounds this season and are struggling with less teams to keep going. B.B. Eagles and Ibis have merged so that they can keep going and Lloyds have done the same. So we can be thankful for what we've got and make sure we work hard to keep it.

And what have we got

- A great little bar with a great post match atmosphere (even when we've lost)
- A good core of loyal members and hardworking organisers
- A lot of new members so make them welcome and we need more so please chase up your mates.
- Our changing rooms and pitches are by no means the worst in the league and the work we have done has helped and we can do more
- A thriving youth section for the future that needs our support.

So we need to stick together and work our way through this sticky start.

**Max Herbert**



## **DISCIPLINE**

Dear Players,

It gives me great pleasure to come back to Merton FC in my new role as 'Discipline Officer' and importantly be part of a fantastic family club. (My youngest son – Oliver is the Goalkeeper for our U10s).

I joined Merton FC as a player back in 2004 with 6th Team – 2005/6 Manager for 5s where we gained promotion as Champions – I recall this was a very special time for me and all players involved.

Since then I focused on refereeing and been very lucky to have officiated at many senior games within Amateur Football circuit and been blessed with appointments with FA on Vase and FA Cup matches as an Assistant Referee.

For me – refereeing has always been about the players and has allowed me to be involved with the game I love so. I am not saying job is easy – it takes patience and a great deal of discipline to succeed – though I believe that is the case in many aspects of life.

### **How can I help you – Players/Managers (Bread of Merton FC?)**

1. By working together – Call Me if you need to discuss any incidents or have concerns about player/referee.
2. Captains – Make your appointed referee welcome by introducing yourself and asking if they need anything?
3. Captains – Act as true role model/leader on the pitch and work closely with referee to apply conduct and let referee deal with misconduct.
4. Players – Allow your captain to work with referee – no point everyone shouting – show respect and trust me you will get it back from referee.
5. Avoid silly bookings – 'Unsporting Behaviour' - these were largest volume of fines from 2014/15 season. "Walk away – dust yourself up and allow referee to handle the opposition player who has put you up in the air etc."
6. Smile – Smile – we all love the game and so do all officials.

### **How Will Fines be issued to players?**

1. Discipline Officer will be notified by county – AFA through the Online System – Whole Game
2. Fine will be paid immediately to AFA via club.
3. Players – will be notified by email of the fine and breakdown of the incident and costs incurred – Captain & Manager will be cc'd in the email as well.
4. Players will have 14 days from email notification to make payment to Merton FC – details of payment will be shown on email.
5. Player **MUST** Notify 'Discipline Officer' that fine has been paid and by what method and when. (VERY IMPORTANT).
6. Discipline Officer will update Master Tracker Report.
7. Failure to make payment on time could lead to a suspension and should this be case player will be notified and Captain and Manager made fully aware.

### **How can you help?**

Last season 2014/15 Merton FC was issued over 54 fines and 4 of these were for serious related incidents. As a result the club incurs additional penalties and costs when club exceeds different tiers of penalty points (costly to club).

I urge every player to think about how they behave and how they speak to Referee/s – can you improve? Do you think your behaviour is acceptable? Can you be an Ambassador for club and support Merton FC – to win 'Fair Play Award'?

Together I believe we can and will – thank you again for all your support – I am here to help and want to!

### **David Laughton (AFA Senior Referee/FA Coach/Discipline Officer)**

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# RAM'S HEADS UP!

(BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND OR YOU HAVE NO CHOICE IN THE MATTER!)



1. Old people at weddings always poke me and say "your next".  
So, I started doing the same thing to them at funerals.
2. Men are like bank accounts... without a lot of money they don't generate a lot of interest!
3. If people could read my mind... I'd get punched in the face a lot.
4. I'm not totally useless... I can be used as a bad example.
5. Facebook is like jail, you sit around and waste time, write on walls and get poked by people you don't know.

## EDITOR'S WORST KITS EVER

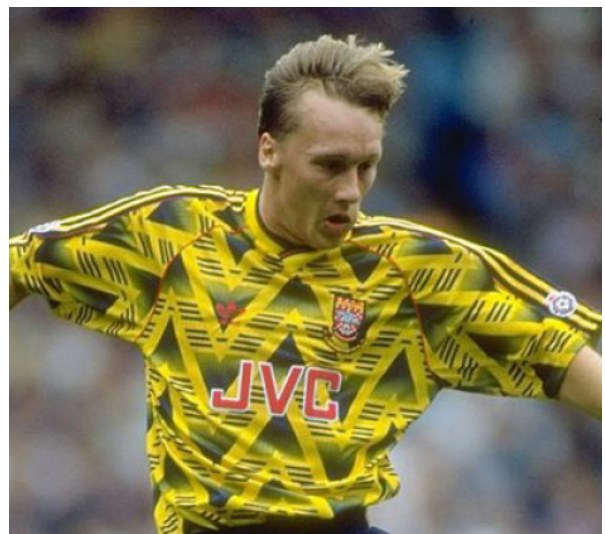
### Arsenal's Away Kit: 1991/93

As worn by: **Lee Dixon**

Manufacturer: **Adidas**

Sponsor: **JVC**

Arsenal's "bruised banana" kit, which I've chosen purely to demonstrate to you that while I love '90s kit design more than is strictly healthy, even I have my limits. Because this thing is ghastly. Indeed, it's hard to know what's more baffling: the fact that they introduced it in the first place, or the fact that they wore it for two whole years...



## TV OF THE WEEK

The Great British Bake Off - BBC 1 \*\*\*

# MATCH REPORTS – 19.09.15

## 1XIs

### WEIRSIDE RANGERS 1 v MERTON FC (HT: 1-0)

#### SCORERS:

#### MOTM:

Weirside are a club that has done well to survive as it has had the silver spoon wrenched from its mouth. As Lensbury it used to enjoy the patronage of Shell and the wonderful facilities at Teddington, but when it lost the privileges, the club buckled down and have made it work by renting pitches at Imber Court, Hampton Court. They are expensive but nice.

It was a lovely day and a good game for the neutral. The result of the game hung as ever on missed chances and refereeing decisions. We dominated the first half and created good openings and had several great shouts for penalties and just when I was wondering what it would take for the ref to give a penalty, Weirside attacked and I found out. We had to commit the foul and it was a blatant penalty which Arturs saved, but they smacked home the rebound. So 1 down at half time against the overall run of play.

I am afraid the second half carried on a bit like that although Weirside created a few more chances but were as profligate as us. The feeling grew during the game that it was not our day and it certainly was not. We worked hard, Weasel (David Graves Rat's brother) showed well and another new signing Will Kearns worked his socks off, but it ended up with the single goal defeat.

### MERTON FC 0 v OLD PAULINES 2

#### SCORERS:

**MOTM:** Mike Stone (for another assured and classy display at the back, and also now permitted to join the whatsapp group as evidence of his progression. Honourable mentions to Mike Reed, Denys and Vin.

Bouyed by an opening win at Crouch End, the 3s turned up full of confidence (and on time!) for an AFA cup duel with Old Paulines. Despite the well-publicised loss of some players to higher teams (thanks to Neal for a brilliant video), a strong team had high hopes of progressing and made the confident choice to take the larger top pitch, even though it meant bringing the goals in ourselves.

This may have been a mistake. A young, enterprising Paulines team took advantage of a flat start from Merton (perhaps getting there on time had upset the rhythm of some players football clocks!) to pass rings around us with some neat, if not unduly threatening, football. This changed about 20 minutes in, when after a corner was only half cleared at the near post by Paul Ellis, Paulines managed to guide it home through a crowd of players from seven or eight yards out. 1-0.

Neal then went off with a recurrence of his hamstring injury (Adam coming on in his place) and 4-3-3 reverted to 4-4-2. Perhaps due to the formation change, or equally likely, the desire to get back into the game, Merton rallied. Suddenly two or three yards sharper to the ball, they closed and harried the opposition out of their passing game and began to get on top. Dan fired over the angle of post and bar from a narrow angle, and also had a good shout for a penalty turned down after an excellent ball from Ryan. Denys was battling hard in the middle, winning headers and had a shot from distance saved. Several corners came as went as Merton put in a sustained spell of pressure, but even our pre-match corner planning failed to deliver this time. And this proved to be the story of the rest of the game, truth be told.

Unlucky to go in a goal down at half time, Merton kept up the pressure throughout the second half, without ever quite creating a clear cut chance. Mike Reed and Mark Chappel both went close after some pinball in the box in a grandstand finish. Yomi came on and did well, as debutant Adam with some nice touches on the ball. At the back, Vin and Mike were in control, with Mike Reed also putting in a couple of surging runs from full back. Ryan Gresty put in his usual combative performance, and so impressed was the referee that he rewarded his efforts with a yellow gold star, or was it a card, for a "reckless" one footed, ball winning tackle that had MOTD pundits calling for a retrospective 3 match ban afterwards.

At this point, a new section dedicated to Paul Ellis, who was cruelly overlooked from the match report last week, despite stepping in to play an unfamiliar left back role and doing a sterling job at it. This week Paul switched to a more familiar right sided role, and in his own words (disclaimer: some of these may actually be his) "had too many good moments to mention". More importantly, the introduction of a new section to the match report helps to distract from the disappointing final scoreline.

But, back to the game. With even goal machine Darcy failing to deliver this week, Merton resorted to piling players in the box for the final few moments, hoping to salvage something to take the game to extra time. Alas, it was not to be, and in a further cruel twist of fate, Paulines added a second in injury time on the break despite a clear offside that the ref had the good grace to admit after the game.

Next week, Crouch End return in the other cup, aka the one we can win. Although that's perhaps a self evident statement given the result above in the AFA cup.

### MERTON FC 3 v WEIRSIDE RANGERS 3

**SCORERS:** Dom Plumridge (2), Dulanie Richards

**MOTM:** Arnold Collier

The second game of our 2015/16 league campaign saw the visit of Weirside Rangers. A team that personally I had not face in the ten years that I had been at Merton. Having been thumped by five goals to nothing last week, we knew that Weirside would be trying their utmost to get their first three points of the campaign. With the defeat we suffered at the hands of Polytechnic last week, the three points were vital to us also.

Unfortunately we were missing the presence of Dan Gridley in the middle of the park due to work commitments and our Captain Chris Outred after he was called up to assist the 2s in Acton. We welcomed Michael Elgar into the squad along with Steve Burchell as a defensive back-up. Arnolds impressive display last week earnt him a start meaning Dulanie re-joined Dom up top.

It was a slow start to the game by both sides; most passes were misplaced and attempted through balls intercepted every time. It wasn't until 20 minutes in that we managed to work our way through the visitors defence and break then down. Dom, showing great skill and determination, managed to beat three defences on the left of the penalty area and roll a ball to Dulanie who then beat the keep with a composed side footed finish. We didn't manage to hold onto the lead for long with Weirside managing to equalise through a header.

A good period of play, where we managed to play the same football that we did against Old Salesians during pre-season, resulted in us going into the break one goal to the good thanks to a solo effort from Dom.

A good first half was followed by a pretty poor one. The opposition started brighter than we did using the speed of their wingers successfully on each flank. This resulted in second equaliser that was probably deserved. After conceding the second, we tightened things up at the back and let Dom and Dulanie do what they do best. With the way that we were playing it was clear that we could score again and that is exactly what happened when Dom unleashed a 25 yard left footed shot into the roof of the net. We were now deservedly leading 3 – 2 with 15 minutes to go. A number of injuries meant that we had to switch people around slightly. The last thing you want to do is change your back four when leading however we had no other option with Steve Burchell coming on to replace Joe at the back with the former moving into the middle of the park.

Weirside kept piling the pressure on but found it hard to break through. The changes did not seem to be having an effect on the performance. With five minute to goal Weirside were awarded a corner. Unable to track my man in time, more concerned with organising who was marking who, the ball was floated to the back post to be met by a bullet header in the roof of the net. 3 – 3 is how is finished. A result we felt should have been bettered.

One of the main things that came out of the game is the need to organise set pieces earlier. Had we done so in this game then we would have walked away with all three points. Next week we travel to Old Actonians looking to improve on our slow start. If we keep the consistency flowing then it is only a matter of time before results start improving.

**TEAM: SAMUEL SINGER-RIPLEY (GK), JOHN GRIDLEY, GLEN PORTER, JOE PLUMRIDGE, EDWARD PLAISTOW, RYAN BURCHELL, AARON ACKERMAN, MICHAEL ELGAR, ARNOLD COLLIER, DULANIE RICHARDS (DAN PLAISTOW), DOM PLUMRIDGE (STEVE BURCHELL).**



# MATCH REPORTS – 26.09.15

## 1XIs

### MERTON FC 1 v IBIS EAGLES 2

**SCORERS:** Tom Rowe

**MOTM:**

Another disappointing result and another even game that went against us. It started badly when the ref turned up. I don't know what I fear most, but none of them are good. Ref turns up with his family/turns up and gives the pre-match speech about making mistakes and needs help/turns up with assessor. Well we had the assessor this week, so lots of fussy decisions. More than necessary so a lot more mistakes. So with the ref being under pressure and making mistakes made life a little difficult in a fairly even game.

Our centre back Alex did his hamstring after 5 mins and had to go off with Woody, proud father, coming on. They scored a good goal to go 1-0 up, we made a bit of a muzzy for their second goal, however, we pulled one back when Tom Rowe fired home. We couldn't force the equaliser and the point that we deserved. Even the assessor thought we should have had a penalty when Rat was pushed over in the box but it was not to be.

I thought two years ago when we were promoted out of this division we had a bit of good fortune so we are paying for that now. Still, some of our players will be coming back from injury and better times are just round the corner. For the second week running we had two sets of brothers in the side the Gladkows and the Graves (Rodents).





**MERTON FC 1 v CROUCH END VAMPIRES 2 (HT: 3-0)****SCORER:** Denys**MOTM:** Ryan Gresty (Not just because he's writing this report "honest", but probably more of a sympathy vote from the lads after limping off)

It felt like Groundhog Day at The Hood as Merton 3s lined up against the hoodlums of Crouch End for the third time in 4 games (ok, one was a 2s game but there were lots of familiar faces), looking to make it 3 from 3 and progress in the big ISEH cup. It's a cup that's often labelled "the one they all want to win", as opposed to the AFA "we wouldn't have won it anyway" cup that we crashed out of last week, so despite the usual squad-juggling that is part and parcel of 3rd XI football these days we lined up motivated and confident. Spirits were further stirred by rumours that 3s manager Paul "Walshy" Welch, hitherto unseen in season 2015/16, would be making an appearance. They proved unfounded, but we started like we meant business anyway, winning first and second balls and looking the better side until a long hoof forward led to a... ahem... misunderstanding between the new centre back pairing of Joel and Vinny and keeper Kieran which allowed a sneaky little Vampire to nip in and set up his mate for a tap in from a yard out. A classic amateur football moment, and this historic cup has certainly seen its fair share of those.

Undeterred by this setback, Merton kicked up a gear. The new centre forward pairing of Dave Scott and Denys were giving the CEV back four a torrid time with the midfield diamond including debutant Seb feeding the ball into the channels and deploying the usual level of compete in the air and on the deck. Darcy typified this with a determined effort to win the ball back on the edge of their box and set up the equaliser. Some would question why he'd given it away in the first place but this author prefers to focus on the ball he subsequently whipped into the box for Denys, rampaging like a bull towards the near post, to volley emphatically into the roof of the net. Hero quickly turned to villain when another storming Merton counter-attack down the left saw the ball squirt towards goal machine Darcy's left boot on the edge of the box, just waiting to be stroked home. In accordance with the amateur football handbook, Darcy "put his name on it" but that must have been lost in translation as the big Ukrainian intervened to slice the ball out for a throw. 60 seconds later, when he might otherwise have been completing a lap of honour soaking up the adulation of the crowd, Darcy was on his knees on the edge of the the Merton box claiming that his eyeball had popped out after the ball was smashed in his face. Frantic searching ensued, and the eyeball was located in the last place we thought of looking - his eye socket. Darcy was told to man up and we played out the half all square.

At the break it was looking pretty positive as Merton had been the better team, but we came under sustained pressure from the restart. A Vamps break down our left threatened to produce another moment for the Merton blooper reel, as Vinny poked a whipped cross towards his own net where Kieran stopped sharply. Apart from that blip, the Merton back four stood firm against the onslaught, our new CB pairing growing in confidence as the game went on, ably supported by fullbacks Ricardo and Paul Ellis. Merton attacks were limited to occasional forays up the other end, Lofty twice coming close from Delap-esque long throws and Yomi not quite able to gather a cross just behind him that would have offered a tap in. Skipper for the day Ryan then injured himself attempting to deliver a trademark cruncher and after hobbling around uselessly for 5 minutes was given the hook by former skipper Neal Davison, now running the show from the sidelines having been crocked last week. The Captain's Curse has now accounted for Neal (hamstring), Ryan (ankle), Mustard (poached) and Welch (missing, presumed abducted). There'll be some nervous faces when Lofty is handing out the metaphorical armband next week.

That paved the way for Adam Trevena's introduction, and he came within a lick of paint of sealing our place in the next round when a thumping drive came back off the post and we couldn't manage to bundle home the rebound. With five minutes to go, another thumping drive by the same player was blocked by the backside of Darcy, still bumbling around looking for his eyeball on the penalty spot. He did recover to hack the ball limply towards goal but it was just about saved and smothered by the keeper on the second attempt. Games are won and lost on such bounces and sure enough just as extra time beckoned, a Crouch End attack saw the ball pinball around our box and fall to their substitute who fired it into the open net. There was barely time to kick off before the ref blew the final whistle which consigned us to a heartbreaking defeat.

Plenty of positives to take from the game; the quality of debutants, the effort from all 13 players, and also a good ref which I thought warranted a mention (compared to, say, last week's. But let's not get on to that...). In the end it all amounted to nothing and we are staring down the barrel of "concentrating on the league" just a month into the season. There's one more chance to avert that in the league cup. Let's not waste it.

## 4XIs

### ACTONIANS ASSOCIATION 8 v MERTON FC 2 (HT: 3-0)

**SCORER:** Dan Gridley (2)

**MOTM:** Dan Gridley

The first of two trips to Acton was upon us to face a very strong Actonians Association 5s side. Having beaten the same opposition we draw with last week so convincingly by five goals to nothing in the first game of the season, we knew that this was going to be a very tough game.

We arrived in good time with the whole squad there at least 45 minutes before KO, a first! With help required at the back we welcomed Mike Todt into the squad from the 3s. An addition that we hope will be a regular as the season progresses. Another new addition was Jake Hewitt, a good friend of the Plumridges. Kevin Locke was also part of the squad as the result of the sixes fixture being postponed.

We started off brightly with some good passing play however a good counter attack allowed the hosts to take the lead. Not long after was it 2-0 when Sam was spotted too far to the left of his goal which allowed the same player that bagged the first to fire into the bottom right from about 25 yards. It was 3-0 going into the break, Chris Outred giving away a penalty for a handball that could not be prevented. An attempted header out from a low ball played into the box from the left that got caught underneath him. 'Ronaldo', as he was referred to by a number of us, converted neatly.

It was a little disappointing going in at half-time three down, it was not what we deserves from the football that we were playing. A few changes were made at the break with Ryan coming off to be replaced by Jake. Arnold gave way for Kevin who slotted in alongside Mike at the back with Chris reverting to the left of midfield.

The second period was nearly a carbon copy of the first. Everything that Actonians attempted they seemed to pull off.... it just wasn't our day. Another five goals by the hosts (according to the SAL website even though I only counted seven) allowed them to run out convincing winners. Two goals from Dan Gridley, one of which was a great free-kick that the keeper could do nothing about, put a little gloss on our performance.

A lot of work needed before the next game to come up with the right formation that will enable us to have a decent chance of victory. HSBC visit Joseph Hood next weekend with three points needed.

**LINE-UP: SAMUEL SINGER-RIPLEY (GK), JOHN GRIDLEY, CHRIS OUTRED, MIKE TODT, EDWARD PLAISTOW, RYAN BURCHELL (KEVIN LOCKE), MICHAEL ELGAR, DAN GRIDLEY, ARNOLD COLLIER (JAKE HEWITT), DULANIE RICHARDS, DOM PLUMRIDGE**

# YOUTH SECTION

The Youth section is in full swing now and all teams have played competitive games.

The U10s have started particularly strongly with great performances and a strong squad. The parents are very supportive and training sessions are well supported.

John Head is working well with the U11s and they had a great win at the weekend away from home at Ewell 3-1. The U12s with Kevin have strung good results together

The U13s had a great win at the weekend in a friendly against Croydon having beaten Raynes Park Vale 3-2 the previous week. The U14s have had a flurry of late signings and registrations which have not yet come through, so they are not yet at full strength but Nick has been working hard with the lads to pull the side together. Both the U14s and the U13s still have a couple of places for the right players.

Youth Football requires a lot more organisation and administration than the adult section and Steve and the managers have done a brilliant job to launch this section so successfully as we build for the future.

The parents have all been very supportive and we are very grateful for this.







**MERTON FOOTBALL CLUB**

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