PITCHING IN SOUTHERN LEAGUE

SATURDAY EVENING E-NEWSPAPER

Saturday 14 September 2024

PRAISE FOR CHURCH



There was limited action in the Pitching In Southern League Premier South and Central this afternoon due to the Emirates FA Cup second round qualifying taking place.

In the Premier South, leaders, AFC Totton, slipped to their first League defeat of the season in an entertaining encounter at Dorchester Town, who came from behind to win 3-2.

Over in the Premier Central, the leaders at the start of the day, Stamford, also succumbed to defeat as they lost 3-0 at AFC Sudbury. It meant that Alvechurch took the opportunity to go top as they won for the third game in a row against a Halesowen Town outfit who were also in good form going into the game. A sweet debut strike from Dan Shaw settled this one late on.

There are also new leaders in Division One South and what a story it is for Helston Athletic in their first-ever season at Step 4 level. They came from behind to beat Bideford 2-I with both of their goals coming in the final 20 minutes.

The Cornish club went top as Yate Town saw their 100% start to the season come to an end with defeat at Exmouth Town. Meanwhile, Bristol Manor Farm were big away winners, hitting six at Cinderford Town, who remain without a point since securing promotion back to this level at the end of last season.

In Division One Central, new-boys, Real Bedford and Flackwell Heath lead the way. They both had commanding away wins this afternoon as Stotfold picked up their first point of the season courtesy of a 2-2 draw at Beraconsfield Town.

There were some fantastic results for our Member Clubs in the Emirates FA Cup, none more so than at Bishops Cleeve where the biggest game in their history ended in an excellent 3-0 victory over former Football League outfit, Torquay United. A crowd of almost 1,200 was there to witness history in the making. Congratulations to everyone who made it through – a full list of results can be found inside.

REPORTS FROM ALL GAMES | STATS | FEATURES



Ever thought of volunteering to help your local football club?

There are many different volunteer roles in non-league football and Southern League football clubs need your help with them.

The Trident Leagues and Pitching In's online Volunteer Hub is the place where you can find opportunities and contact your local football club.

Please visit

Pitchinginvolunteers.co.uk

to find out more









PITCHING IN SOUTHERN LEAGUE PREMIER SOUTH & CENTRAL

Dorchester Town 3 AFC Totton 2 (Premier South)

The League leaders took the lead seven minutes from half-time when Charlie Austin was able to add to his tally as he side-footed home.

An equaliser arrived for the home side just before the hour-mark when Olaf Konzsela fired beyond the reach of the 'keeper and then just moments later, the same player turned the scoreline on its head.

With the home crowd right behind them, Wayne Robinson added a third goal with 20 minutes to go.

This really was an entertaining encounter and Austin notched his second deep into stoppage time to make it 3-2 but it proved to be too little, too late for his side.

AFC Sudbury 3 Stamford 0 (Premier Central)

The home side drew first blood within the opening ten minutes when Callum Page put them in front and they were able to build upon their positive start as Josh Allen doubled their advantage with just quarter-of-an-hour played.

Myles Cowling rounded off a good afternoon's work for the hosts with a third goal in stoppage time at the end.



Alvechurch I Halesowen Town 0 (Premier Central)

This encounter pitted together two teams in good form and it was a cagey affair with both teams having opportunities.

As it looked like heading for a goalless stalemate, Dan Shaw, on his debut, popped up to put the home side in front with six minutes to go as he curled home from distance with a goal worthy of winning any game.



PITCHING IN SOUTHERN LEAGUE DIVISION ONE SOUTH

Cinderford Town | Bristol Manor Farm 6

The deadlock was broken when Louis Britton slotted home from the penalty spot following a handball to put the visitors ahead on 16 minutes and shortly afterwards, Josh Bissett was able to double the lead with a sweet strike.

The deficit was reduced just past the halfhour mark through Andrew Lewis but George Dowling restored the visitors' two-goal advantage on the stroke of halftime.

It was much the same vein after the break as Bissett added a fourth goal and then on 68 minutes Britton made it 5-1.

Right at the death, Daniel Dodimead made it six for the visitors in what was an emphatic victory.

This was proving to be a hard-fought affair with both sides cancelling each other out

deadlock to be finally broken when Connor Barrett put the hosts ahead and that's how the scoreline stayed.

Evesham United 2 Bemerton Heath Harlequins 2

The visitors got their noses in front through Ronan Clancy, but within two minutes, Reegan Messanger had levelled the scores.

Early in the second period, Ethan Moran was on hand to put the hosts ahead for the first time in the game but the away side hit back as Karol Skoczen made it 2-2 with just under quarter-of-an-hour to go and that's how it stayed with both sides taking a share of the spoils.

Exmouth Town 2 Yate Town 0

Our Game of the Day burst to life in the 17th minute when the home side took the lead through Michael Landricombe.

The second goal arrived for the hosts with 20 minutes to go when Ben Griffin gave them some breathing space and they held firm to secure a big three points as the visitors saw their 100% League record come to an end.



PITCHING IN SOUTHERN LEAGUE DIVISION ONE SOUTH

Falmouth Town AFC | Thatcham Town 0

The home side broke the deadlock as halftime approached thanks to Rubin Wilson and it was to be a lead that they managed to hold on to as they secured a muchneeded three points.

Helston Athletic 2 Bideford AFC I

It was the visitors who went in front as half-time approached as Cieran Bridger was able to find the net in what was the first meeting between these two teams. Shortly after taking the lead, the visitors were reduced to ten men as Aaron Taylor saw red and their day got worse when the on-loan Jack Crago levelled things up with 20 minutes to go and then proceeded to grab the winner in stoppage time with his second goal of the afternoon.

Shaftesbury 2 Bashley 2

The visitors broke the deadlock with 12 minutes on the clock as Luke Delaney was able to guide the ball home.

With half-time approaching, Brett Williams was sent off for the visitors for his second yellow card and then in first half stoppage time, Greg Peel levelled matters from the penalty spot.

The home side went on to take the lead just past the hour-mark as Remus Nixon was the man on target but it was cancelled out by Lewis Waterfield as the clock ticked down.

Right at the death, Ashley Wells was sent off for the home side as he picked up his second yellow card to leave the scores level as well as the number of players on each team.





PITCHING IN SOUTHERN LEAGUE DIVISION ONE CENTRAL

Aylesbury United 2 Hertford Town 0

The home side broke the deadlock as halftime approached when a penalty was saved but Ben Peters was alert to head home as the ball stayed alive.

With the hosts asking most of the questions, Ben Stallard was able to curl home from a corner to give his side a deserved three points.

Barton Rovers 3 Leighton Town 2

It was the visitors who went ahead with 16 minutes on the click as Louie Barrett was able to turn the ball home.

The hosts were able to restore parity midway through the first half through John Shamalo and then buoyed by the goal, the turned the scoreline on its head on the half-hour mark through Markel Cousins. A second goal from Cousins followed ten minutes from the interval to make it 3-1. The visitors hit back early in the second period as Ben Ford reduced the arrears in what was proving to be an entertaining encounter, which ended with a hard-earned win for the hosts.

OFFICIAL MATCHOAY PROGRAMME Beaconsfield Town vs. Stotfold Southern League Division One Central

mind BHearthstone

Beaconsfield Town 2 Stotfold 2

The visitors took the lead on the half-hour mark through Joseph Sellers-West and then saw the home side have a penalty saved by Liam Gooch soon afterwards.

The early exchanges of the second period saw the home side get back on level terms through Eremide Lawal and it wasn't long before Elias Grant put them 2-1 to the good.

The away side kept battling, though, and were rewarded late on with an equaliser from Haroon Meriai to earn a share of the spoils.

Enfield FC 0 Flackwell Heath 2

It was the visitors who took the lead in the 12th minute when Wiktor Makowski stayed cool to despatch from the penalty spot.

A second goal arrived just before the hour-mark as Matty Ayres gave the visitors a two-goal cushion as they secured another three points.



PITCHING IN SOUTHERN LEAGUE DIVISION ONE CENTRAL

Leverstock Green 0 Real Bedford 3

The deadlock was broken with just under ten minutes to go until the interval when Shaheim Ward gave the away team the lead.

After the break, the visitors went on to extend their lead just before the hour-mark through Joe Evans and then Jack Morrell sealed the game with around 20 minutes to go as he added a third goal.

An afternoon to forget for the home side saw Rawn Seale dismissed late on.

North Leigh 0 Kings Langley 2

The opening goal arrived early in the second half as Lance Williams gave the visitors the lead against his former club. Just minutes after the opener, Qasim Khan was on hand to guide the ball home for the second and that's how the scoreline stayed.

Thame United 0 Welwyn Garden City I

It was the visitors who took the initiative when Layne Eadie found the net to open the scoring in the sixth minute.

That is how the scoreline remained as the visitors held on to their early lead to secure a hard-earned three points and also a clean sheet.

Ware I Hadley 2

After a goalless and closely-fought first half, our Game of the Day burst to life within a minute of the restart when Isaac Stones fired the visiting team ahead.

Parity was restored ten minutes into the second half when Samuel Kifwasima Mayuma found the net for the home team.

The pendulum swung back in the favour of the visitors when George Alfieri fired them back in front and they were able to see the game out.





EMIRATES FA CUP SECOND ROUND QUALIFYING



SATURDAY EVENING FEATURE

ONE CLUB ONE VISION

These are exciting times for Larkhall Athletic as they prepare for their first competitive game at their new-look home...

This Wednesday will see their redeveloped Plain Ham ground stage its first senior, competitive game, whilst an official opening event will also take place towards the end of September.

The Pitching In Southern League Division One South club have installed a FIFA Pro quality 3G playing surface, alongside a new 250-seat stand and enhanced floodlights with LED technology that will benefit not only the first-team, but over 600 young players as part of their One Club, One Vision aspiration.

Not only that, the project also encompasses environmental landscaping, planting and a comprehensive update of the other facilities on site that will benefit the local community as a whole.

"The objective behind the project was to develop exceptional facilities that would enhance our on-field performance and enable the 600 young players in the club to train and play games at our Plain Ham home, which was previously unfeasible," Chairman, Paul Rankin, told us.

"Furthermore, we aimed to offer an enhanced experience for supporters, which will be facilitated by the new 250-seat stand that is now in place here.

"The journey from inception to completion has likely spanned a decade. However, since obtaining planning approval for the 3G pitch in December 2022 and securing the required funds, the project has taken two years.

"The construction phase was relatively straightforward, although the contractors might disagree, and it took 16 weeks from start to finish. Thanks to the selection of skilled contractors, consultants, and



FIELD OF DREAMS | The new playing surface at Plain Ham

advisors, as well as stellar project management by the Club, we have achieved a smooth delivery, on schedule and within budget.

"Our aim is 'One Club, One Vision' which is to make the club fully inclusive from the youngest players to the senior teams and to provide a wider accessible facility that provides for our diverse community.

"Ultimately, we strive for success on the pitch with the objective of playing at the highest possible standard within the restraints of our finances and facilities.

"The enhancements will generate additional revenue which will ensure that the Club continues to be sustainable for the long-term and is not only for the short-term, but is a legacy which we can all be proud of.

"I am honoured to be a member of the Leadership team at the Club, which is built on the dedication of our long-standing volunteers. These individuals, some of whom have been with the club for over 50 years, are the cornerstone of our success and are all vital to the realisation of this landmark project."

LARKHALL ATHLETIC | PAUL RANKIN



Having come so close to securing a play-off place last term, ultimately missing out on the final day of the season, they have started the current campaign with one win and two defeats from their opening three League games as well as progress into the second round qualifying of the Emirates FA Cup, where they travelled to Frome Town earlier today.

"The season has been somewhat disrupted since we haven't been able to play at home, with the exception of one game hosted by Bath City," continued Rankin, a 62 year-old Director of Fire Safety Services and Aviation at Securitas Security Services UK Limited. "As I speak, we've secured victories in two FA Cup matches and one out of three league games. We're confident in our squad's ability to compete, and we're fortunate to have an excellent management team headed by Ollie Price. "We typically don't set specific objectives for the manager, trusting in his ability to maximize the resources at hand, although he might mention that the play-offs have come up a few times in our discussions!

"This League is never easy; newly-promoted teams often perform well in their first season, and the threat of relegation for four teams this season is a concern for many.

"Typically, it's the teams with larger budgets and more resources that are expected to vie for promotion and play-off spots. We aim to disrupt the status quo and challenge these clubs."

Rankin has been associated with the club for over 35 years, firstly as a player, then manager and now as Chairman.

"I've been Chairman for the past decade," he concluded. "I'm still humorously searching for that escape tunnel and even after digging up the pitch, I still can't find it!"

The club will play its first first-team game at the new facilities on Wednesday when they host Bashley before staging a New Ground Development Open Evening on Friday, September 27th between 4.30pm and 8pm. There will be ground tours, entertainment and a pig roast. It's great to see such fantastic developments taking place at the club that will benefit the lives of so many people.



We hope that you can join us in celebrating the completion of the club development which will enable the club to realise its One Club One Vision aspiration and allow 600 young players to join the senior teams in playing and training at Plain Ham.



NEWS ROUND-UP

CHERTSEY TOWN | COMEBACK KING CONOR

It was one of the stories of last weekend's action. Finding themselves three goals down at home to Winchester City with just half-an-hour on the clock, Chertsey Town produced a rousing comeback to earn a share of the spoils from a 3-3 draw.

Conor Lee was the hero with a hat-trick, including a dramatic stoppage time equaliser for the Pitching In Southern League Premier South new-boys.

"I hadn't scored a hat-trick since the age of seven or eight, so this one was pretty special," Lee told us with a smile. "Having not lost a League game at home for over a year, even when we went three goals down, we still had the belief that we could get back into it. "We felt that if we could get a goal back before the break, it would stand us in good stead for the second half, and so it proved, although I must admit that we left it a little bit late to level the scores!

"To comeback from three goals down and get a point shows the character that we have within the group; there's a never-say-die attitude here which is serving us well.

"This is a new League for us and a new challenge. We've started well, apart from that first half-an-hour on Saturday where we fell well below the standards that we have set ourselves.

"The general feeling is that we should probably have a better points return than we currently have. It's about being more ruthless at both ends of the pitch.

"We have a lot of players who have played in this League before, so it's nothing new, we came into it with our eyes open as to how hard it is and how everyone is capable of beating each other on their day.

"We've won two, drawn two and lost two of our opening six games. Getting into the play-offs is the goal and we know that we're good enough to do that if we can keep everyone fit."

This afternoon saw Conor Lee and his teammates turn their attention to the Emirates FA Cup with a second round qualifying tie at Hanwell Town.



ALVECHURCH | TOGETHERNESS, HEART AND PASSION

Two successive I-0 away wins have thrust Alvechurch up to fifth in the early Pitching In Southern League Premier Central table and with three home games in a row now coming up, all against opponents in the top four, these are exciting times for the Worcestershire club.

On Tuesday evening, a goal from Dylan Hadley was enough to see them to victory at local rivals, Redditch United.

"It was a tough battle against very good and direct opponents," Hadley told his club's media. "It was more of a mental challenge than physical for us; we had to stay focussed, particularly towards the end, to hold on to the three points.

"It was a big win for us and I was happy to contribute with the winning goal. I saw the 'keeper coming off his line and just tried to lob it over him. Thankfully it came off and the ball ended up in the back of the net!

"That's two away wins in a row now and two successive clean sheets. It's all about having the right attitude and not getting complacent.

"We've had our bumps this season, but we're working hard and it's paying off for us. We have three home games coming up now against three opponents who have started the season well and are expected to be right up there this season.

"We'll focus on ourselves and what we do rather than worry about them too much. Togetherness, heart and passion will get us through, with our supporters also having a big role to play in this too."

A mouth-watering home encounter with Halesowen Town took place earlier today, whilst in seven days time they host Stamford, followed in quick succession by the visit of Stourbridge on the following Tuesday.



INFLUENCER

We find out which players most influenced our Pitching In Southern League stars...

BAILEY STEVENSON (WELWYN GARDEN CITY) > HARRY KANE

The player who inspired me the most growing up, and still does, is Harry Kane. He's a natural goalscorer who works hard and brings so much to every game he plays.

NEWS ROUND-UP

LEVERSTOCK GREEN | COLLINS MAKING A CONTRIBUTION

Having recently joined the 100 Club at Leverstock Green, Lewis Collins is hoping to be able to help the club push on in their first season in the Pitching In Southern League Division One Central.

The likeable front-man is a product of the club's youth ranks and a popular figure at Pancake Lane.

"It's a nice feeling to reach 100 games and I am extremely proud, especially as I have come up through the ranks here," he told us. "I probably should have reached this milestone sooner, but I got there in the end!

"I'd say that it has been a very up and down season for us so far. We've played well at times in some games and we have probably deserved more in terms of points on the board, but we are learning all of the time.

"The quality of this level is obviously a lot higher than we have been used to, but we have a good group here and we are more than capable of competing. Hopefully I can kick-on and get as much game time as possible and be able to contribute with goals and assists.

"Securing our place at this level has to be our main aim first and foremost. Then once we've done that, there is no reason why we can't look at making it into the top ten."

This afternoon saw them play host to fellow Division One Central new-boys, Real Bedford.





BIDEFORD AFC | KEEPING WELL

Bideford returned to winning ways in the Isuzu FA Trophy with a 2-0 first round qualifying victory over Pitching in Southern League Division One South rivals, Malvern Town, last weekend.

What made the triumph even more impressive is the fact that they did it by playing for over half of the game with outfield player, Finn Roberts, in goal after he replaced the injured Lloyd Marshall in the 36th minute.

Roberts dealt with everything that came his way, despite never having played in goal before.

"I've played in goal on FIFA, but never in real life," he told us. "When Lloyd had to go off and with no 'keeper on the bench, I had absolutely no hesitation in taking the gloves.

"As I say, it's a position that I am yet to tick off competitively, so I thought why not give it a go? I was more than happy to step up knowing that I get to just kick the ball as hard as I can up the field!

"I'd like to think that I've given the Gaffer food for thought with my performance. You can't change a winning team, especially when the goalkeeper keeps a clean sheet!

"It's been a tough start to the season, but like every other League, it's still very early days and we're not getting worried. We just keep our heads down, plug away and I'm sure we'll start to move in the right direction.

"The League is just as tough as it was last season; we were right up there last time and I am sure we can do the same again this time around and go one better by getting in the play-offs this time."

We ended by asking whether he would volunteer to go in goal again should the need arise?

"Absolutely," he responded without a moments' hesitation. "It was good fun..."

It's back to League business today with a trip down to Cornwall to face Helston Athletic. Whether Finn Roberts has kept his place in between the posts remains to be seen!

FIXTURES | THE WEEK AHEAD

Pitching In Southern League Premier South

WEDNESDAY 18 SEP 24
Gosport Borough v Dorchester Town

SATURDAY 21 SEP 24

Basingstoke Town v Sholing
Bracknell Town v AFC Totton
Dorchester Town v Chertsey Town
Hanwell Town v Gloucester City
Havant & Waterlooville v Frome Town
Hungerford Town v Plymouth Parkway
Merthyr Town v Gosport Borough
Poole Town v Walton & Hersham
Taunton Town v Marlow
Tiverton Town v Winchester City
Wimborne Town v Swindon Supermarine

Pitching In Southern League Premier Central

SATURDAY 21 SEP 24
AFC Sudbury v AFC Telford United
Alvechurch v Stamford
Barwell v Leiston
Bedford Town v Redditch United
Bishop's Stortford v Stourbridge
Bromsgrove Sporting v St Ives Town
Halesowen Town v Hitchin Town
Kettering Town v Lowestoft Town
Royston Town v Banbury United
Spalding United v Biggleswade Town
Stratford Town v Harborough Town

Pitching In Southern League Division One South

WEDNESDAY 18 SEP 24 Larkhall Athletic v Bashley

SATURDAY 21 SEP 24 Willand Rovers v Cribbs

Pitching In Southern League Division One Central

TUESDAY 17 SEP 24 Hadley v AFC Dunstable

SATURDAY 21 SEP 24 Kidlington v Biggleswade FC Kings Langley v Northwood Ware v Welwyn Garden City

The week ahead is designated for Emirates FA Cup second round qualifying replays.

Fixtures are subject to change. Compiled in association with Atos.

We are extremely proud of the Southern League Goals of the Week Show that David Square and his team work so hard to produce on our behalf each week of the season and we urge clubs to please send your goals footage for use in the show each week.

The address to send your footage to, by 7pm each Tuesday evening, is:

thesouthernfootballleague@gmail.com

The show can be viewed via our Official You Tube Channel from 7pm every Wednesday evening.



There is plenty of great action coming up throughout the Pitching In Southern League. Please show your support wherever possible and if you are interested in getting more involved and finding out about volunteer opportunities, check out the Pitching In Volunteer Hub via: southern-football-league.co.uk/Pitching-In-Volunteer-Hub

We hope that you enjoyed this edition as we look to showcase all that is good within the Pitching In Southern League. Feedback is always welcome, please email: news@southern-football-league.co.uk

Enjoy the rest of your weekend...

Andy Poole (Editor)



THE BACK PAGE















