

Bedfordshire Football League
November 2007 Newsletter

With the season now having run a third of its course we take the opportune moment to review happenings to date, in **The McGirls Money Management Supported Premier Division** we see **Sandy** leading the way at the head of the table who having lost their opening game of the campaign at **Blunham** then went and put together a eight game winning run before losing at **Caldecote** in game number ten of the season to have a three point advantage at the time of writing over **Campton** who like **Sandy** begun their season with a opening day defeat at home against **Ickwell & Old Warden** but have since won eight of their next ten outings to place themselves right there in the championship hunt.

Perhaps the surprise package so far are **Oakley Sports** who are still holding down a 100% home record and having conceded just ten goals to date, new manager Jim Burke looks to have on his hands a real championship contenders squad who could yet be the 2007-08 version of **Westoning Recreation Club** last season.

Also enjoying a better season and currently holding down fourth spot are **Luton Borough** who enter the middle section of the season the divisions second highest goalscorers but also they have yet to keep a clear sheet at the other end of the pitch which must be something manager Perkins Matereke needs to address quickly if **The Borough** are to stay in the championship hunt, elsewhere **Meltis Corinthians** will be happy with their current placing in the top six in this their first season of premier division football and having now recaptured their home form with three straight wins their final placing could well be determined by their haul of points gained away from Miller Road.

Currently just above the Sweetboys are **AFC Kempston Town** despite having a poor return of points from their trips on the road, having lost at **Sandy, Luton Borough** and **Oakley Sports** but with wins at **Campton** and **Westoning Recreation Club** plus a draw at **Ickwell & Old Warden** perhaps the fixture list has not been to kind to **The Town** in the early part of the season then comes a cluster of clubs you would expect to see nearer the top of the table for **Ickwell & Old Warden** it's a worry of lack of points on home soil having failed to win any of their opening five games on The Green while at the same time four wins have come from their opening six away encounters.

Caldecote however are still unbeaten on their home patch at Harvey Close but have won just once on the road whilst **Blunham** having bagged the maximum nine points from their opening three games have suddenly come off the rails failing to win in their next six outings until it became seventh time lucky at home against **Riseley Sports** last weekend.

Of the clubs currently sitting in the bottom six, one is perhaps most surprised to see last seasons champions **Westoning Recreation Club** whose defence of their title looks already to be over having opened the season without gaining a point from their opening four home games before ending **Ickwell & Old Warden** 100% away record then following this up with a win over **Oakley Sports** whilst **Riseley Sports** place is perhaps down to the fact that they still looking for their first away point of the

campaign while **Renhold United** are also struggling to pick up points on the road with just four coming their way from the opening six trips on the road.

Two other clubs yet to win away from home are **Wilshamstead and Woburn** whilst **Sharnbrook** only win of the campaign came at the only club keeping them off the bottom of the table **Woburn**.

In The Sportsform Supported Division One table we find **Bedford SA** looking set to make a quick return to the top division come next April leading the way at the top of the standings whilst holding down the divisions only seasonal unbeaten record and coupled with the fact they are also the sections leading goalscorers it would take a braver man than me to suggest they will not return to the top flight at the first time of asking.

The reformed **Dunton** whose opening ten games have seen them only drop points twice, first away in a 1-1 draw at the league leaders then with a home defeat the following weekend by **Henlow** currently hold down second spot but right there on their shoulders are **Westoning Recreation Club Reserves** who still remain unbeaten on home soil and many people's pre-season favourites for the title **Henlow** who having lost two of their opening four games are now unbeaten in their last five and could yet emerge as **Bedford SA** most serious challengers for the league crown.

Making up the present top six are surprise package **Kempston**, one of only three sides yet to draw a game this season and newly promoted **Sandy Reserves**.

Similar to the top division we then find three sides who you would have expected to find closer to the pace of the title race, **Flitwick Town** who having failed to win any of their opening six games are now beginning to get their act together with four wins from their last five outings, **Campton Reserves** who like **The Town** started badly with just three points from their opening seven matches until collecting the maximum from their last three and **Reddings Wood** who having started with three wins from their first four games have now only won one of their next five.

Down at the base of the table are **Marston Social** whose eight games to date have all ended in defeat to leave them six points adrift of **Royal Oak Kempston** who like last season cannot seem to win at home having lost four of their opening five encounters.

Just a point better off than **The Oak** are **Elstow Abbey 06** who again are finding trouble picking up home points with just one having been gained to date which leaves them a point behind both **AFC Kempston Town Reserves** who are another side yet to win on home soil this campaign and **Caldecote Reserves** who are currently on a run of five outings without a win.

In Division Two the table is currently topped by **Meltis Albion** who are also the seasons leading goalscorers but their lead at the top of the standings would be cancelled out by any of the next three sides should they win the game they have in hand over the men from Miller Road, just a point behind in second spot are **Putnoe United** whose position is down to having collected five wins from their opening six away games whilst **Marston Shelton Rovers** who are just a further point behind

United still remain 100% on the road this season but have dropped points in three of their six home fixtures including a defeat at the hands of league newcomers **Bedford College** who hold down fourth spot just three points adrift of the league leaders .

Making up the top six are **Great Barford** and **Newham Athletic**, **Barford** however have played the divisions most games to date and it was not until game number twelve last weekend that they managed to win two games on the bounce whilst **The Athletic** are having their best ever season despite having won just once on home soil to date from five attempts as the same number of games on the road as brought about four wins and just one defeat at league leaders **Bedford Albion**.

Below these we find **Oakley Sports Reserves** who having lost their opening two home games have since recovered to remain unbeaten in their next four and **Mulberry Bush** who would be much closer to the promotion race should they not have lost three of their opening five home games whilst remaining unbeaten on the road results which suggest they could still yet fight their way into the promotion race.

The next cluster of clubs will all be a shade disappointed with their starts to the season, **Saffron** having now lost their last three home games, **Ickwell & Old Warden Reserves** who have lost five out of seven away from The Green, **Clifton** who having won their first three games of the campaign have since to win since but at least they can point to the fact that they have at least two games in hand of every team above them in the standings, **Blunham Reserves** who only won once in their opening six games but are now on a recovery mission being unbeaten in their last four outings and finally **Meppershall Jurassic** who have won just twice from ten outings.

The bottom three sides now already looking like they are set for a long hard winter, **Lidlington United Sports** who are yet to collect a home point, **Renhold Village** who are yet to collect an away point and **Woburn Reserves** who's cause has not been helped by their failure to fulfil two fixtures and thus picking up a penalty of minus six points.

If you think things are close at the head of the Division Two table then don't look at the Division Three standings as whilst **Blue Chip** currently lead the way having won nine of their opening twelve games they are being chased by no less than six sides who are within seven points of them but having all played at least two games less than **The Chipmen**, current second places **Marabese Ceramics** are not only the divisions highest goalscorers but have also conceded the least amount of goals to suggest its only a matter of time before they take over the top spot but don't tell that to third place **Caldecote A** the only side to have lowered **Ceramics** colours this season or indeed **Riseley Sports Reserves** who are still unbeaten at home plus their's **Kings AFC** who have won their last seven league outings and **Potton Wanderers** who are unbeaten in their last eight games or even **Meltis Corinthians Reserves** who still remain unbeaten at home this season to consider all of whom could well yet lift the league title come next April.

Below this group of clubs come league new comers **AFC Shillington** who are only being let down by their away form having gained just one win from six outings and **Marsh Leys** both of whom look set for a mid-table finish at the worse, comments that also apply to **Flitwick Town Reserves**, **Twinwoods Thistle** and **Stewartby Village**

which then leaves perhaps **Sandy A and Wilshamstead Reserves** the two sides who would be striving to get amongst those expected middle-tablers because even at this stage of the season you cannot see either **Lidlington United Sports Reserves** who have already leaked seventy-seven goals from their opening ten games or **Exel United** who have yet to recorded a win from their opening ten encounters getting themselves out of the bottom two places in the table.

Love Football But Hate Shopping

Are you one of those players out there who is coming to the end of his career and from now on the wife is likely to get her own back and have you out shopping on Saturday afternoon's, well why not consider putting a little back into the game that has given you so much pleasure over the years by becoming a referee, The Bedfordshire FA are currently looking for your help and would be pleased to hear from you right now.

The man awaiting your call is Chris Checketts on 01582-567724 or 07930313413

You know it makes sense , call him today, the wife could then be buying you a little black number for Christmas.

Bedfordshire FA Junior Cup Third Round Draw

Bedford SA v Kempston
Linslade v Flitwick Town
Sandy A v Meltis Albion
Offley Social v USL Galacticos
Westoning Recreation Club Reserves v Kings AFC
Luton Leagrave v Saffron
Ickwell & Old Warden Reserves v Dunton
Henlow v Marsh Leys

All ties to be played on Saturday January 13th 2008 kick off 1.30pm

Visit Our Leagues Website

Our own site is now very much up and running at www.bedfordshirefootballleague.co.uk where im sure you will find something to interest you, the site in certain areas is very much still under development with new items being added on a weekly basis.

Please have a look at let us have any feedback comments, good or bad.

Bedfordshire Inter-League Centenary Cup

Manager Kevin Hallett has named a sixteen man squad for the league's Semi-Final tie against The Luton District and South Beds League which will take place at Wootton Blue Cross on Wednesday November 28th Kick Off 7.45pm, the chosen squad is Michael Dring, (Dunton) Darren Minney (Riseley Sports) Alan Turner, (Ickwell &

Old Warden) Barry Morris, (Dunton) William Sells (Sandy) Alex Toye (Dunton)
Neville Allen (Meltis Corinthians) James Davies (Riseley Sports) Danny Fox (Ickwell & Old Warden) Wayne Goldsmith (Campton) Dean Warren (Meltis Corinthians) Tom McGhee (Dunton) Zak Rowe (Ickwell & Old Warden) Gary Gibson and Andrew Hayday (Campton) Matthew McCartney (Sandy)

Hear It First On Biggles FM

BigglesFM will be back on the air from November 27th for its usual monthly period running up to Christmas and each Saturday at just after 6pm there will be a full reading of that days Bedfordshire Football League Results plus reports on the days leading days, to hear our news first tune into Biggles FM Sports Talk programme on 87.9m wave each Saturday.

All Our Yesterdays

This Month we take a look at The Bedford & District League Handbook issued for the 1953-54 season being the 50th season in the league's history to show just how much things have changed since that time, the pocket size handbook shows the league's Hon General Secretary and Treasurer as being one Mr E W Taylor who lived in Westfield Road in Bedford and was priced at ninepence in old money which it was compulsory by league rules for all Division One sides to purchase 24copies, and all other sides to purchase 18copies plus each registered referee a copy each.

The handbook on page two gave some very interesting advice to club secretaries from the league secretary on the subject of unregistered players he wrote, Don't risk playing an unregistered player because you want to save the cost of a league form, it is false economy and an attempt to save registration will cost your club £1 1s 0d with the offence of playing a man who is ineligible leaves a nasty taste as it happened rather too frequently in past seasons, i have a good stock of league forms, and the printer is always ready to replenish my stocks if his bills are paid promptly.

On the subject of late starts he adds, late starts are another bogey so give yourselves plenty of time when travelling by road and get your players to realise the value and importance of turning up promptly, matches delayed are a great nuisance to spectators and one can hardly gauge the bad impression it conveys and the nasty effect it has upon the prestige of the league, moving onto the subject of Postponements we see such wise words as, If a fixture must be postponed give as much notice as ever possible,remember there is such an instrument as the telephone and telegram, if you know on a Saturday morning phone or wire at once.

Do not wait for the post as this means practically the loss of two days and that loss of time might just prevent your opponents being able to fix up another match, in short, postponements can be done nicely and politely and a lot of the friction which does occasionally crop up between clubs could be avoided.

Another piece of interesting reading comes with his notes to and on referees, please notify acceptance or refusal of appointments within three days of notice of appointment and advise your open dates for the following month, if under exceptional circumstances on the day of any match you are unable to officiate, please endeavour to secure a substitute from the official list.

When we go onto looking at the details of the teams forming the league just 27 of them from the 55 in total have a secretary with a contact telephone number and just 13 having dressing rooms on the ground with the majority of others changing in public houses or local village halls etc that is apart from what must have been a well educated Goldington Sports whose dressing rooms are quoted as being in The Reading Room and just what arrangements the boys of Sharnbrook had with the ladies of the village I can only guess at with their dressing rooms being in The Women's British Legion Hall.

Of these 55 teams just eight of our current member clubs took part, Great Barford and Stevington in Division One, Campton, Clifton and Sharnbrook in Division Two, Dunton plus Ickwell & Old Warden in Division Three and Renhold United in Division Four with perhaps five others having a slight name change from their present day set-up, Sandy Albions and Woburn Sands in Division Two, Marston Sports in Division Three and Flitwick Athletic plus Wilstead United in Division Four.

Also in membership were clubs that have gone onto a higher level of football today in Division One, Ampthill Town and Kempston Rovers plus Langford in Division Three whilst Potton United Reserves were in Division Two and Wootton Blue Cross Reserves in Division Four.

Of the other sides making up the league, we find numerous village sides that no longer sadly have a club/team, Haynes, Stondon Athletic and Wrestlingwoth in Division One, Bletsoe, Carlton and Maulden in Division Two, Bromham, Cardington, Cotton End, and Husband Crawley whilst Flinton and Greenfield, Moggerhanger, Southill & Broom and Wyboston were in Division Three and Aspley Guise, Silsoe and Thurleigh were plying their trade in Division Four.

The other clubs in membership being RAF Brampton, Beds & Herts Regiment, Mewa Sports, Whessoe and Carlton Training School.

On the subject of The Management of the league all clubs were obliged to have up to two members at each of the leagues management meetings which were held monthly from the start of the season until November then bi-monthly until March with clubs not in attendance being fined ten shillings.

The Subscriptions were being in the league were £2 and 2shillings in Division One, £1 and 15shillings in Division Two, £1 and 10shillings in Division Three and just £1 in Division Four, in addition to these fees players registration fee for Division One and Two were set at one shilling and six pence each whilst in Division Three and Four the fee was just ninepence, clubs also having to pay a entry deposit of £2 and 2shillings in Division One and Two and £1 and 1shilling in Division Three and Four to cover any liabilities for non-fulfilment of fixtures and to maintain the financial stability of the league should it become necessary.

For clubs in those days it was normal for a gate entry fee to be collected which the league advised should be set at a level they consider proper and fair and that all proceeds would remain the property of the home club.

Fixtures for the season were however not arranged by a League Fixture Secretary but between member clubs at a special convened meeting, if clubs were unable within fourteen days to agree any fixture for the coming season then the executive committee made a ruling that was final, clubs were also in the same manner expected to re-arrange any postponed games within fourteen days of them being called off.

Kick Off times back in 1953 were set as follows, September 3.15pm, October 3.00pm, November- January 2.30pm, February 3.00pm, March-April 3.15pm, this perhaps being due to the fact that it was normal for working folk in those days to only finish work at 1pm each Saturday. not as now 5pm on a Friday.

The position of Promotion and Relegation was also just not a simple case of finishing in the top or bottom two, if you were one of the top two clubs then you had to make a formal written application seeking a place in the division above for the following season whilst if you finished in the bottom two you were allowed to make a application in writing to stay in the same division for the following season.

Under the clause of Qualification of Players it is noted Professionals are only allowed to play for clubs in Division One except when registered under Form K and then only with the consent of the Management Committee and if you think the registration of players is far from clear now a days then just read your way on the registration clause back in 1953 which reads.

A club entering two or more Division shall enter its playing members as First, Second or other Division players but must have a full team registered for each Division in which it is competing , a player will not be permitted to play in a lower Division than that for which he is registered, a player who has played six matches in any Division shall not be eligible to play in a lower Division after March 1st without the permission of the Management Committee , each player signing a Second Division or lower form shall state the full name of the club he played for the previous season, he shall also give any further particulars the Management Committee may desire.

Members of a club who have received a championship Momento shall not be allowed to compete in the same or lower Division for the ensuing season, this does not apply to Clubs in Division One or to Reserve teams referred to in Rule19, The Management Committee however can permit special registration contrary to the regulation governing winners of championship momentos, but no player can be so registered until the Management Committee has considered the special circumstances and approved of that players written application for individual consideration.

A club playing an ineligible man will be fined £1 1shilling for each non-registered player, and the game awarded to the opponents, in the event of technical breaches of Registration the Executive have the power to allow the result of the game to stand or order the game to be re-played and at the same time fine the offending club.

The Secretary of each club shall receive from the League Secretary a registration receipt form which must be produced on the application of another Club Secretary.

Another item to catch my eye was that regarding telephone messages, which reads, all telephone messages, whether to or from the League Secretary must be confirmed in writing within 24 hours.

In reviewing the list of 64 referees registered we find one C H Simmonds currently one of the league's Life Vic- Presidents and a very young Fred Seaton.

A list of the seasons fixtures start on page 25 of the handbook showing the season opening on August 22nd with a Division One Fixture between Kempston Rovers and Mews Sports and a Division Two fixture between Whesoe and Beds & Herts Regiment and after another seven games on August 26th/29th the full programme kicked off on Saturday September 5th and run until the season ended on May 1st of the following year with games between RAF Brampton and Goldington in Division One, between Wilstead United v Clifton and Sandy Albions v Duloe and Eaton in Division Two and Beds & Herts Regiment Reserves v Silsoe in Division Four but the most eye catching game of the season was the Division Two clash between Sandy Albions and Potton Reserves which was fixed to be played on Christmas Day and for good measure there were seven games fixed for Boxing Day including a Division Two game Duloe & Eaton v Sandy Albions, so I guess when asked what they wanted for Christmas the players of Sandy Albions replied a game of football.

The Handbook closed with the final tables from season 1952-53 which showed RAF Brampton winners of Division One five points clear of runners-up Bucken, Stevington placing third, Great Barford sixth, whilst the bottom two sides were Goldington Sports and St Neots & District A, The champions of Division Two were Stondon Athletic a point clear of Duloe & Eaton with Campton in fourth spot, Sandy Albions fifth, Sharnbrook sixth, Woburn Sands seventh and Clifton ninth, the bottom club being Bedford North End.

The Division Three Champions were Maulden Avenue seven points ahead of Dunton with Marston Sports in third spot, Elstow Abbey Reserves were tenth and Turvey finished bottom of the pile whilst in Division Four, Sandy Albions Reserves were the champions on goal difference from Ickwell & Old Warden with Stevington Reserves bottom of the table having gained the same points as second from bottom side Flitwick Athletic Reserves.

