

Sunday 30th March 2008

Mercury Waltham Sunday League Division One Match at the Holtwhites Sports & Social Club, Enfield

NORTHMET (RIVERSIDE)

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EDMONTON ROVERS

MATCH POSTPONED...NON-FULFILMENT BY US !

Report (by Laurence Hughes): This game had to be called off 10 minutes before kick-off when, on realising we only had 7 men at the most (the minimum number that we can start a game with), **Paul Woolston** decided to go to Church instead (and pray for our future !?), thereby leaving us with only five players at the venue and only one more (**Danny Green**) supposedly on his way. Referee Russell Howes therefore had to be given £30 from our subs tin to put his feet up (if he wanted) as by League rules we were forced to concede the match...this not being the first time our First Team had been guilty of a non-fulfilment of a competitive Sunday League fixture since our time in the League, while Northmet's players were understandably furious after they had spent nearly an hour before the match forking the pitch to make it playable and were already changed and warming up when I was 'sent in' to their changing rooms to call it off. (Who would be a Club Secretary, eh ??!).

Of course, joking aside, it was actually for legitimate family reasons that Wooly had to go to Church, and the other five players who bothered to turn up (**Martin Loveday, Alan Barnard, Tony Speller, Tony King & Tem Adil**) were all in agreement that it would have been silly to attempt to play with only seven anyway....Barney in particular, as it would have seriously damaged his hopes of finishing the London Marathon, while Tem was suffering from a hamstring strain and probably wouldn't have finished the match.

One of the problems we have is that other teams never 'non-fulfil' fixtures against us on the morning of a match once we are all at the venue, mainly because they always field full-strength sides against us because they want to get on video ! We therefore don't realise how annoying it must be for them when we do it. Imagine it at Hazelwood if we had all got changed and were warming up on the pitch in pouring rain, then having to get the nets down, having a shower, cleaning out the changing rooms, etc without kicking a ball because our opponents had turned up and then cried off at the last minute ?

To that extent, the blame for this shambles lies with a handful of players who were clearly not prepared to drag themselves out of bed (or bother to get in touch to help us out), just because they didn't fancy playing with only 9 or 10 men and getting 'thrashed' (again)...in full knowledge that another non-fulfilment of fixture in our next game (a Double-Header) could see us thrown out of the League and forced to fold up after 32 years. They will know who they are, I have a fair idea who they are, and we will not bother to register them to play for us next season if we have enough players without them.

The main reason we found ourselves in this predicament for this match in the first place was a horrendous injury list and unavoidable work and family commitments for no less than 13 current/regular/first-choice players as follows:

Stuart Dorward....Long-term Hamstring Injury

Conor McGovern...Broken Thumb (Out for the rest of the season)

Terry Moore...On Honeymoon

Danny Hagan....Torn Pectoral Muscle (Chest Injury)

Steve Cokell....Broken Foot

Clark Williams...Arthritic Foot

Rob Brown...Working

Derek Dorward...Working

Stuart Byhurst...Training for the London Marathon

Nick Vertigans...Family Commitments In Finland

Vernon 'Kizza' Nxumalo...Foot Injury

Ozel Ozerman (GK)...Ankle Injury helping his Dad at work the day before

Kris Spyrou...Working

On informing the League of our current predicament, we gained little sympathy because of the fact that we have 36 players registered, and indeed they are not allowing us to register any more for this season (post registration deadline) because of that. Unfortunately we cannot prove to them that roughly half of those players either have no intention of playing for us again (for various reasons) or are out injured for the rest of the season. We will therefore have to field players in some of our remaining matches (such as myself and Stuart Dorward) who are just willing to stand on the pitch as a statue (because of injuries) so that we can fulfil all of our

remaining fixtures and avoid being thrown out of the League. Yes, it's that desperate I'm afraid !

TREVOR HUGHES'S MANAGER'S REPORT

I was disappointed to hear that we lost 5-0 with only 10 men while I was in Cyprus and I returned to the news that the squad had gone down to 8 for Sunday's match against Northmet. Scott Jenkins also dropped out on the morning of the match to leave us with 7 and whilst I organised a 3-3-0 formation we would have struggled with the zonal marking at corners. I was proud of the 9 men who only lost 2-0 to Enfield Royals a few weeks ago but it would have been farcical to play with 7 so we had to reluctantly forfeit the game. The league rules mean that we are under threat of expulsion from the league if this happens again. We have a large number of injuries and unavailability for other reasons but we must do everything we can to fulfil these last few fixtures of the season. I do not want to be relegated as I believe we will have a much stronger squad next season and we can still pick up points if we can field a full side. However, even if we lose we must play the fixtures to avoid being expelled so please make every effort to come and play some part next week.