

AFC Wimbledon US Dons Newsletter

Issue 13 – July 2006

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US Dons – News

This month's newsletter begins the 2nd year of the US Don's Newsletter. Still a long way from the long running achievements of Robert Smith and the WDSA, the Wombles Down Under, but we are on a mission and will keep up the chase. Time flies when you are having fun!

How is every doing without the daily football fix? Off-season is a drag! This year we at least had the World Cup to hang onto for a while. The television coverage over here was quite amazing, it seems "football" is finally taking hold over here.

Not too much news on the US Don's front. The proposal to renew our kit sponsorship did not receive much interest. A good deal of you continue to hit the Don's chat line and I'm sure interest will resurface as the new season gets underway.

On a personal note, I was able to make the first home pre-season friendly during my trip. It was the first time AFC Wimbledon played a league opponent at Kingsmeadow since the new club resurfaced. The game was against Leyton Orient, who gained promotion to the league last season. A good crowd of over a thousand supporters was treated to a rousing 2 –1 victory. The Don's new kit was on display for the first time, after its inauguration the previous evening in the back bar. I came home with a set each for my grandkids.

The following day Sunday, the Don's Master's team, played at Wembley arena in the London Master's tournament. They joined Tottenham, Arsenal and Charlton in a round robin affair. Seven minute halves, with the top two teams going through to a final. The final winners advanced to the national finals. Wimbledon featured the likes of Marcus Gayle, Carlton Fairweather and Allen Kimble, plus several others names from the past. A large contingent of Wimbledon supporter's line the stands and were quite vociferous. The first game saw the Don's tie Arsenal, but after taking the lead against Tottenham, lost to a couple of late goals. Their final game against Charlton decided who would play Tottenham in the final. Despite taking a two goal lead and retaking the lead after Charlton tied the game, a final two goal flourish by Charlton with the last kick of the match decided the game in favour of Charlton. Tottenham won the final in another thriller,

coming from two goals down to finally secure a spot in the nationals. The whole tournament was broadcast on Sky Sports, so the club got ample coverage.

As always, any news items, comments or ideas are welcome.

We have a contacts page attached, and anyone who doesn't mind sharing their info, let Dave Hambly (SoCal) or myself know. I try and send the newsletter to your e-mail as well as have SoCal post it on the website.

Stay in touch.....

“Come on you DON’S”

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David Garlinge
(Limeydg).

AFCW News

The new season will soon be on us. Pre-Season friendlies are well under way and the kick off of the new Ryman Premier league begins the middle of August.

Last season will probably be viewed as not a roaring success, after the prior seasons of consecutive promotions. Most people seem happy with our progress in the league, and making the playoffs. However, the inconsistency of the team resulted in disappointing progress in the FA Cup and FA Trophy. And the final defeat against Kingstonian in the Surrey Senior Cup Final will leave a bad taste in everyone's mouth, more so with the trophy still being encased at Kingsmeadow but in the Kingstonian show case.

The expectations for the coming season will be much higher. Promotion to the Conference South will be the order of the day (season). A good showing in the FA Cup and FA Trophy will also be expected. We begin both these cups in the 1st preliminary rounds. The prize money awarded for victory in each round has been increased and runs in both competitions will certainly help fill the coffers! Our first games in these two competitions have already been announced (they are both home ties) and are posted on the fixture list on the official website.

As always, you will be able to listen to the home games on Radio WDON, and while listening get on to the Chat line and lets get behind our team, even if we can't be there in person.

The off season was quiet for the longest time, but as the budget process was approved, Dave Anderson became extremely active and seems to have brought in some new talent that should bode well for the new season. The new striker from Aldershot, Roscoe D'Sane looked good in the pre-season opener against Leyton Orient and he scored the first goal of the season. Unfortunately as new talent is brought in, some of the old favourites exit the scene. Check out the official web-site for the comings and goings. One player we will all be sad to see go is Shane Smeltz. But we cannot hold talent like that back and he has hopefully begun his move up to greater stardom. Shane has signed for Halifax, the details of the move have not been publicised, except for the fact there is a clause where AFC will be compensated for any future transfer from Halifax to a bigger team. I think

you will all join me in wishing Shane a very rewarding future. He certainly did us proud while he played with us.

Hot off the press: The friendly against FCUM for the Supporter's Direct Cup resulted in a 2 – 1 victory for FCUM, and the cup which we held for two years, is now in their hands. A healthy crowd of over 2,000 was on hand for the game (nowhere near the crowd (3300) we had when we entertained them for the same trophy at Kingsmeadow last year). There is a healthy respect between the two clubs after AFC helped FCUM begin their existence following the unpopular "Glazer" takeover of Manchester United. The match was marred by the sending off of a player from each side, Scott Curley being the AFC player taking an early shower.

COME ON YOU DON'S

Guest Column:

Ian Hidden who attended this year's major fundraiser, A Dinner with Dave Basset, wrote this article. The Dinner was a huge success and the auction afterwards contributed greatly to further reducing the Khosla loan.

HARRY BASSETT TUCKS INTO DONS' MEMORIES 'SECRET AGENT'

AND SO it came to pass, that after many weeks of behind-the-scenes organisation by Mike O'Shaughnessy and a few others, the big day arrived in the back bar at Kingsmeadow. The opportunity to literally have dinner with Dons legend Dave Basset was upon the fortunate couple of hundred who had paid a tidy sum for the privilege. Unfortunately for 99% of those in attendance, the literal meaning was somewhat different as Harry had the top table on the stage with a select few, while the minions were seated at floor level in tables of nine or ten!

It was interesting to see the definition of lounge suits as worn by some of our fans, but nobody really cared as more than a few pints were supped before taking our seats at a crisp white tablecloth with matching serviettes. 'Harry' took his position flanked by Kris Stewart and Dave Anderson plus a couple of people I later discovered were the comedian for the evening and another gent whose name escaped me! Mike O introduced the evening and explained that there would be a couple of games to start off while waiting for dinner to be served. All a bit of fun and with no little cheating in certain areas. Finally, a number of winners were found and these gents shared a couple of hundred quid.

And so to the starters. Fairly simple stuff with Parma ham and fresh (?) figs which was not bad if you like a mouthful of chewy meat and seeds that get stuck between your teeth for days. At this stage, jackets were on the backs of chairs and ties had generally been slackened off as the internal temperature rose to just above comfortable. A strange mix of Neanderthal males and generously attired females was selling raffle tickets in a variety of hues. All for the Ground Fund, of course, so who could possibly refuse?

Main meal came and passed without incident really. Not being a huge fan of lamb, I had plumped for the Mushroom Stroganoff and, having fasted nearly all day and not taken too much to the starter, was looking forward to a gourmet dish. Alas, it was not to be. More water than an Olympic swimming pool took the heat out of the rice, but it seemed clear that this was what passed for a sauce according to the caterers. As a non-veggie, I could at last appreciate how those who choose not to eat meat might feel when served with a third world meal as an alternative! Not impressed so far by the fare and I wasn't alone either.

Anyway, at least we had the after dinner speeches to look forward to. Not before a couple of auction items though, where the wife of the organiser bid at least £200 too much for an evening of catering by R.Eds (which included the washing up, but not the provision of the food!). Still, it was all for the Ground Fund.

Finally, Harry had finished his scoff and took to his feet to rapturous applause from the floor. Phillo did his usual excellent job of bigging up the main attraction and assured us all that we wouldn't be disappointed (maybe he had been at the dress rehearsal?). Dave started by taking us through his career at Chelsea (boo), Walton and Hershams (bigger boo) and the trip to Plough Lane with Lord Batsford. Stories of heroic deeds in all the cups poured forth with Sir Richard of Guy being pilloried mercilessly for taking the BBC silver for post-match interviews following fantastic performances against Leeds and, the following year, Middlesbrough. Cue the propulsion of potato from El Presidente's table in the general direction of the speaker!

Harry spoke with a passion sometimes missing from KM performances this season, something that would not have been lost on the current manager. Through the election to the league, the removal of Batsford and the introduction of the mafia (Dario Gradi), Dave spoke as if it had been only last week, rather than almost thirty years ago. Revelling in the occasional outbreak of "there's only one Harry Basset" the tales of past heroes could have been true or urban (SW19) myth, but I don't believe that anyone really cared. Hodges was described as brilliant at being lazy, Corkie as being a brilliant scorer of goals for a man with no footballing talent and so it went on.

Hilarity at even the old jokes about a player getting pulled off at half time, but what I really wanted to hear was saved to the end.

A couple of seasons ago, Leicester agreed to play Franchise in a pre-season friendly. Harry was Director of Football or some such ludicrous title at the time with the Foxes. Despite approaches by the ever-so-polite people at the DT and some complete fury by the Fosse, the game wasn't called off and many (myself included) wondered if the great man was truly on the side of the fans in south London. No sighting of Bassett at KM despite regular (by comparison) visits from past players such as Sanchez, Ardley, Euell, and Leaburn to mention a few, hardly made it easy to decide whether Harry was doing the gig as just another night for a nice little earner. It was well known that Dickie Guy was keen to make his old teammate come down on the side of reason. Whilst he may not have been 100% successful yet, to all in the room, he was making good progress. Harry ended by saying something along the lines of "you are the people I played for, you are here still and I applaud what you have done in the face of a terrible injustice". Not exactly disowning the Franchise, but clearly heading in the right direction. The man is a cult hero for many of us who witnessed him play for the Dons and then marvelled at the way he took us to the First Division. All he had to do was disown the Franchise. He didn't in my opinion, but I believe he will and then he can take his place among the true greats that have represented Wimbledon's football club. The comedian was John Stiles, son of Hobby. Funny guy, too many one-liners to remember them all but it was his job to get people laughing in readiness for the last auction items and he was excellent at this too. Come the auction and a few people had clearly ignored my advice to restrain from bidding if under the influence of more than a couple of pints!! Ivor Heller had a battle on his hands and it was clear that some bidders were considering their crown jewels when bidding. The scene in the morning when the wife says, "What's this darling?" when spotting a frame with some signed photos and programmes in the lounge. Hubby replies "I won it in an auction, only £2,000, what a bargain". Suffice to say that one winning bidder wasn't seen at the next home game! So, was it a good night? Overall, I'd have to say that the company on my table was excellent. The food was poor for the money (but it was for the Ground Fund). The comedian was very funny, but the undoubted star of the show was Harry. He came, he spoke, he felt the love and it is to be hoped that he feels the need to return. I, for one, would love to see him at one of our games, sitting next to Dickie and chatting with the rest of us in the bar after the game. Welcome home Harry. How good would that be? — IAN HIDDEN

Fundraising Activities

It is not too late to support our club and once again “Sponsor a Player’s Kit” for the coming season. The cost again this season is 200 pounds (approximately \$400), and with almost 50 US Dons members, a small donation of approximately \$10 per member would cover the cost. It is a small price to pay for our long distance support. It let’s the club and players know they have our support, despite the distance between us. It is encouraging to see so many of you on the “Old Centrals” chat-room every weekend and hear the US dons mentioned over the Dons network. Let’s keep our support going for our club!

Anyone with ideas to help us show support for our club is encouraged to send their ideas to us. E-mail them to Dave Hambly or myself.

AFCW and Cancer Research:

OK ... I'm still plugging the cancer research – It does not impact you while you are on the computer and it does not cause you or your computer harm. Give it a try! If it doesn't work for you, then remove the driver.

AFC Wimbledon has always had an affiliation with supporting Cancer research (it has been one of the recipients of the Walk(s) for Wimbledon sponsorships). There is a program that has been in operation for some time, whereby, you can link your home computers to a Grid supporting cures for cancer. The program runs in the background of your PC and will not inhibit your use of the computer, but will run programs when your computer is idle and utilise any free CPU time. A couple of us have set up an AFC Wimbledon team on the grid and are donating our free CPU time to the cause. If you would like to join, I have attached a link to the team below. Click to this site, download the driver and join the team. Each participant and team gain points. It is a good way to advertise and promote the club. Later on we may be able to gain some sponsorships, based on points earned, that could be shared amongst the club and cancer research.

'<http://www.grid.org/services/teams/team.htm?id=C89CDDA3-BE3D-4D7B-8601-87BB77C8329A>'

There are at least 16 football clubs with 'teams' associated with this research, the largest being Liverpool. We are working on a table that will rank the football club teams, by points, by members, etc. Obviously the more team members you have the more points you can accumulate. We can make this a fun thing that can derive great benefits for everyone. So come on all of you, go out to the above link and join the fight against cancer.

Contacts

Here we will list contact information for those of you who want to share. Who knows, in our travels we may be in a fellow supporters area and get together for a beer and chat. Sign up is optional.

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Websites of interest

Official Website - contains schedule, results and game reports:

www.afcwimbldeon.co.uk

WISA: www.wisa.org.uk

Tony Kempster's site: www.tonykempster.btinternet.co.uk

Paul Raymond - ItmustbeDons: www.itmustbedons.com

Ryman League: www.isthmian.co.uk

DonsOnline: www.donsonline.co.uk

Radio WDON: www.wdon.com

NEW chat-room: <http://www.afcwgb.co.uk/gb.php>