

AFC Wimbledon US Dons Newsletter

Issue 9 – March 2006

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US Dons – News

Please see the article under AFCW news, titled “vote on the loan....”. If you are a Don’s Trust member or an AFCW shareholder you have a vote in how our club grows. An AFCW “Extraordinary General Meeting”, followed by a Dons Trust “Special General Meeting” is scheduled for Thursday 30th March. We have come a long way since the rebirth of Wimbledon. When we started and took over Kingsmeadow we bridled ourselves with a massive debt of 2,500,00 pounds to Mr. Khosla. In our three short years, we have extinguished all but approximately 400,000 pounds to Mr. Khosla, with a further 400,000 pounds due to the Dons Trust Bondholders. This vote will lay the future for our continuing climb up the ladder of success.

US Dons new has been quiet. Have seen a few of you out on the Chat Room while listening to the Home games on wonderful “Radio WDON”.

During the Heybridge game there was a Heybridge fan both listening to WDON as well as talking in the chat room, he was extremely complimentary about our set-up and the progress we are making. It was most encouraging to see an opponent’s supporter able to enjoy the game commentary on our network as well as engage in trouble free discourse on the chat room. I would have to say it was enjoyable to be part of it.

As always I will take any letters and/or articles or anything you feel may go well in this Newsletter. Any contributions, including BIO’s, is gratefully accepted.

Some of you existing members have changed your e-mail addresses, as your newsletter is not being successfully delivered via e-mail. Be sure to update either Dave Hambly or myself for continued e-mail delivery.

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.

Don’t forget you can listen to the home games, LIVE on the web (address is posted later on in the newsletter) and join the chat-line during the game and converse with other supporters worldwide. Look forward to seeing you out there!

“Come on you DON’S”

You can reach me:

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David Garlinge
(Limeydg).

AFCW News

Team news as ever could take up a couple of pages. The revolving door continues in earnest in our quest to reach a playoff position and a chance to gain promotion for the third season in a row. Dave Anderson and his staff have been busy. One new player Paul Barnes, whom Anderson refers to as “Butleresque” had his first game against Heybridge and he did indeed sound “Butleresque”. While he didn’t score on his debut, he did cause a lot of trouble for the defense. In this game again the Dons proved they were more than a match for the top teams in our league. Barnes comes with high credentials for his goal scoring attributes. Last year he led the Southern League (East division) and again this year he was the leading scorer before his transfer. With Richard Butler out for an extended period it is certainly a much needed acquisition. According to DA, on the official website, he hopes to have further signings aboard before the trading deadline at the end of March.

Results for March started off in the same manner the whole season has gone, poor results against the lower clubs, yet we can beat the best when we play them. For our goal, of being in the playoffs for promotion, to be achieved we have to be more consistent on the run in.

Hot Off the Press: A victory last night at Harrow has put us back in a playoff spot (5th place) and this coming weekend the four teams above play each other, so another win this weekend can put us even more in the mix. Also DA made 2 more signings who both appeared in the game last night, read about it on the official website.

A victory against Guildford City assured us of a place in the Surrey Senior Cup Semi-Final at Ashford Town. We played Ashford in the FA Cup and drew at Ashford before winning the replay at Kingsmeadow. A victory here will ensure us of a second successive SSC cup final. Kingstonian are in the other semi final, so we could end up with a pair of Kingsmeadow teams in the Final, scheduled for early May.

Vote on the Loan facility from Barclay’s Bank:

On the business front, the board has been able to secure the option of a loan from Barclay’s bank. The matter is being put to a vote of the club, (Dons

Trust and AFCW shareholders). The details can be found on the AFCW website. Also Paul Raymond has a write up on his site (itmustbedons.com). The Barclays loan is at a better rate than what we pay on the Khosla loan by about 2.5 percentage points. We pay Khosla 5% above prime rate, with the Barclays loan we would pay 2.5% above prime rate. However, the loan will have to be repaid monthly over a 10 year period. The Khosla loan is open-ended as long as the interest is paid monthly. The loan amount is also larger than the pay-off of the Khosla load, by about 200,000 pounds, which would allow the ability to secure the “surrounding” lease around the ground and leave some cash available for other improvements. The “surrounding” lease encompasses the areas behind the Kingston Road and the John Smith’s stand. Acquisition of this would allow the club to install additional turnstiles and exits, which would certainly be needed if/when we make an application to join the conference. These types of ground improvements would probably be required to gain promotion to the conference. As a member of the Trust and/or a AFCW shareholder your vote counts. So be sure to read up on the details and have your say.

Editorial:

By my calculations under the Khosla loan we only have to pay the interest monthly (no principal is required). At the current rate of 9.5% interest the minimum we have to pay 3,168 pounds per month. And we do not decrease our principal amount and do not have a fixed date when the loan would be fully paid off.

With the Barclay’s loan, we have a fixed 10 year payment (includes principal and interest) that is similar to a mortgage payment. At the current interest rate of 7%, if we took the full 600,00 pound loan our monthly payment would be in the region of 6,966 pounds per month. The principal would be decreased monthly and we would have a hard target date of the loan being fully paid off in 10 years (or sooner if additional principal paid). These are rough numbers and may be totally wrong but I have seen nothing more definitive. Though, i think my humble math upbringing is somewhat close.

Don’t forget, you can listen to the Home games on the Internet at ‘www.wdon.com’, and while enjoying the game you can hook up to the new chat-room at: ‘<http://www.afcwgb.co.uk/gb.php>’ and chat with some of your fellow Dons. Several of the US Dons are on there as are some of the other distant supporters and the home based supporters who can’t make the game in person. Hope to see some of you out there in the coming weeks

Guest Column:

This item appeared in the Daily Telegraph on February 20th 2006. The home game against Windsor and Eton had been played up on Sky Sports thanks to a rivalry between a couple of high profile players at each of the clubs who also have double as entertainers. Several clips appeared on various Sky Sports shows. The Daily Telegraph has run several stories since AFC's inception, more so than any other newspaper. We thank them for their continued support, as most of the stories are supportive of the club..

TV connection keeps Wimbledon rise in public eye

By Ricky George

(Filed: 20/02/2006)

The build-up to the Ryman Premier League clash between AFC Wimbledon and Windsor and Eton received almost as much publicity on Sky television as the average Premiership game.

The Windsor and Eton player Ralf Little, a lead actor in BBC TV's *The Royle Family* and *Two Pints of Lager* and a *Packet of Crisps*, had appeared on Saturday morning's Sky programme *Soccer AM* to drum up support for his side's visit to Kingsmeadow.

Little recently turned out alongside Wimbledon's former pop star turned presenter Michael (MC) Harvey, in Sky One's *The Match*, in which a team of celebrities took on a side of football legends.

Non-League clubs need all the help they can get when it comes to coaxing people through the turnstiles, but AFC Wimbledon need less than most. Sky's interest might have encouraged a few extra fans to go along on Saturday, but the Dons are the [best supported non-League club outside the Nationwide Conference](#), with the possible exception of FC United in Manchester.

AFC Wimbledon's inaugural fixture, a friendly against Sutton United in July 2003, was attended by 4,657 fans, and with successive promotions from the Combined Counties League in 2004 and the Ryman Isthmian League Division One, home crowds still average close to 3,000, with nearly as many travelling away from home.

AFC Wimbledon are eighth in what is the former Isthmian League, which Wimbledon dominated in the Thirties and the early part of the Sixties, winning the championship eight times. The club's meteoric rise from non-League to the Premiership - including the 1988 FA Cup final win over Liverpool - was possibly the greatest story in football history.

Then their Plough Lane ground was sold. Ground sharing with Crystal Palace, in south-east London as opposed to their home in the south-west of the metropolis, was meant to be a short-term measure. However, when a proposal to relocate the famous little club to Dublin was made known, the Wimbledon Independent Supporters' Association came to the fore, and not before time.

With one farcical idea out of the way, a Football Association Commission then gave permission for the club's majority shareholders to move to Milton Keynes - 70 miles from Wimbledon - against the wishes of the club's supporters. So the fans took a hand and formed AFC Wimbledon, to continue the history and identity of a club which had been formed in the area in 1889 and played at Plough Lane from 1912 until 1991.

Now run successfully by the Dons Supporters' Trust, the club bought the Kingsmeadow stadium, in Kingston-upon-Thames, in 2003. Although Kingston is just two miles from Wimbledon, and the ground of Conference standard, the ultimate aim is to return to the spiritual home of the Wombles as soon as possible. As a continuation of the history of the club, the match programme lists the honours of the original Wimbledon FC. Famous former players, such as the legendary goalkeeper Dickie Guy, the club president, now regard the Ryman Premier club as officially the club they played for.

This Friday, the former Wimbledon player and manager Dave Bassett is attending the club for the first time. "I shall be having a word with him," said Guy, with a smile. "He should have been here before, and it's about time he pledged allegiance."

Saturday's game ended 1-1, with second-half goals from Dwayne Plummer, for Wimbledon, and Gavin Tomlin, for Windsor, within a minute of each other.

The much-heralded clash between the two television celebrities did not materialise, as Little stayed on the bench and Harvey was substituted before the end.

More significant were the two public address announcements shortly before the end of the game: "Today's attendance is 3,158, and the latest score from Huddersfield is Huddersfield Town 5, Franchise 0."

Franchise, by the way, is how AFC Wimbledon fans refer to Milton Keynes Dons, who once upon a time were called...Wimbledon.

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Fundraising Activities

Currently not much happening here.

We need your help to come up with some ideas of how we can help our club raise the money to further reduce the debt owed to the Khosla's.

If you look on the "ItmustbeDons" website, Paul Raymond, webmaster, lists an Amazon.com web click-thru. For any purchases initiated from the "ItmustbeDons" web-site, Amazon funds a donation (commission). This is paid quarterly and Paul passes on the donation to the AFCW Stadium Fund. For the year Paul indicated this enterprise netted over 850.00 for the Fund. SoCal, maybe we could set up a similar setup on our website? What do you think.

We need some:

New Ideas

Send us your ideas for other fundraising activities we could embark upon. One thought is to have some US Dons team shirts made up, which we could proudly wear on our trips back to the homeland. Any takers on this?

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.

If any of you have had trouble getting on to this site, they have had a few problems during a system upgrade. Things are back to normal now, so please take a look and feel free to join up for this worthy cause.

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>