

Football Roundup

FOOTBALL CLUB CAPTAIN REPORT

Season 2004/05

Another season has passed with yet more success but, again, with a little controversy.

The 1st XI, won their league at a canter and are now back in Senior 2. Only two more promotions and we are a Premier Division club again. Looking at the age and talent of the squad, provided they all take pre season seriously, there is no reason why we should not be pushing for promotion again and even challenging for the cups.

The 2nd XI, having been promoted, would have gone top of their league at Christmas, but lost a close encounter with the eventual champions 4 – 3, a match notable for a remarkable goal scoring feat (S McGuire was on the score sheet). Unfortunately, after the loss the season fell apart in the few weeks after Christmas, crashing out of the cup and losing ground in the league. Even so, a very creditable 4/5th place finish with hopes of doing better next year (again if all get fit during pre season)

The 3rd XI, after promotion, challenged in the league strongly until Christmas, but had the wonderful distraction of the LOB Cup. After having the better of the first half they were unlucky to go to half time one down and then the experience of the opposition prevailed in the second half.

The 4th XI finished very strongly and, but for a very poor start to the season, would have been contenders.

The 5th XI had, in the end, a season of consolidation after successive promotions. The dawn of a new era with Paul Reeve taking over the reigns, still submitting reports via e mail, but lacking the depth of previous writers in view of the fact that Paul has plenty of work to do during the week.

The same message as this time last year, the Club as a whole should strive to get fit pre season (preferably by attending training, as well as any work the individual does on his own) and be on the ball from the start by having more than just a couple of pre season friendlies.

We have done well in keeping the number of bookings down (possibly myself being out injured since January has reduced the potential offenders).

One game for the 5th XI was abandoned with the referee feeling that he could not control the players. Unfortunately, he had looked at the number of players involved and assumed that they were all fighting whereas most had actually tried to break up the argument and act as peacemakers.

The club was called before the AFA for this matter and exonerated.

This year we are looking for new volunteers to captain the 2s, 3s and 4s. We must thank Stefan Mulley (2s), Bernie Mensah & Joe Mansi (3s) and Will Annison (4s) for their hard work and hope that we have new captains in place in the coming weeks.

Many thanks to all involved with running the Club for making my job relatively simple and relieving various tasks from my shoulders.

This has been another enjoyable and successful season, let's look for more success next year.

Spencer McGuire

1st X1 Review

The first team enjoyed a very successful season, winning Senior Division Three by 10 points and finishing with a record of won 15, drawn 3, lost 2, goals for 54 and goals against 23. After two seasons of narrowly missing promotion, all of the squad were delighted to take the Club into a higher standard of football.

Despite the manager's attempts to introduce a 4-6-0 formation, the side played 4-4-2, based around a strong and consistent defence, conceding an average of only a goal a game. Kieran Brady played in nets for all but a couple of games, although his half time smoking habit raised eyebrows from the opposition. Kieran also became a father during the season.

The back four was characterised by a lack of hair, with the noticeable exception of the captain (or is that "emergency contact" or Tour de France veteran?). Lining up in defence was usually a combination of Steve "Flash" Gordon, Richard "Wayne" Rooney, Peter "The Fishman" Codd, Jim "The Mountaineer" McTavish, Mike "Mobile" Garvey and Gary "The Shirt" McGuire.

In central midfield, last year's COXA player of the year Dean "Baby Face" Eaton and Mick "The Finger" Gorman were again excellent as was flying left winger Luke Roszkowski who won the First Team Player of the Year award and turned in a number of virtuoso performances. Such is Luke's celebrity status that he has attracted a stalker who stole his jumper earlier in the season (Jim says it fits well, by the way, Luke). On the right wing, Matt Cefai started the season but after being probably the most consistent first eleven player over the past five years, was called away by the Met Police. We hope Matt will be able to play next season, although I understand that Serge feels his heading and "flicks" need to be improved. In his place, Sulae "Drogba" Daramy and James Allen, promoted from the 2s, have performed well.

Up front has been a mixture of Ian "Roops" Austin, Paul "Hammy" Hamilton and Sulae. Roops ended up as top scorer with 16 goals, followed by Paul with 15. Paul's performances also earned him COXA Player of the Year, for the second time in his Clapham career. For the last half a dozen games Anthony Kearney joined the squad, following a transfer from Old Josephians first team where he had scored 32 goals the previous season.

The team must thank John "Manager" Mansi for all his efforts this season, especially given his busy nocturnal commitments in North London. He has made a huge contribution and we are all looking forward to those many laps of the pitch in pre season! The first team are in the very fortunate position of having the Club's full support and we thank Eddie, Spencer and all the captains for this. With a young and

committed side we are looking to another strong season next year, both in the league and the cup! A high turn out in training and extended pre season program should help.

On the social side, the team enjoyed a great day out supporting the 3rd X1 in their cup final (congratulations for getting there boys and unlucky in the final), with Mick Gorman's stamina really coming to the fore with a 3.00 pm to 5.00 am marathon drinking session.

Steve Gordon

4th Eleven 2004-2005

Every season seems to see an influx of good new players or returning players. The optimism at the start of the season was as good as ever in the 4's. There were a few quietly confident that the title would be ours.

We also had a new kit, kindly provided by Ferrari's Restaurant, which we are very grateful for. We certainly looked the part this year!

One player in particular was motivated at the start of the season for a different reason. Adie DeCoursey. During last year's football tour he was given 10-1 on a £10 bet that he would score 10 goals this year, by Dave Leathem. Did he? More on this later.

Disappointed to lose to an average Old Strandians side in the first game, we quickly turned this around and won the next two games. We were confident.

But losing your keeper doesn't help your season. Darren's old injuries finally caught up and the thought of having to make point blank saves from Bill Stewart and myself were clearly too much!

Replacing our keeper proved very hard indeed. So, after asking for volunteers, it was unanimously decided that I should go in goal. Although I didn't play every game in goal, I did play too many.

On the bright side, we did find an excellent replacement keeper in Dave McArthur. He was also excellent because he believed us when we told him that he had to buy jugs of beer for spurious reasons after the game! But, alas, injury hit back here as well. A broken finger from a skiing accident and he was done for.

I mentioned that we were confident.

We won one game out of the next seven, which took us to Christmas and went out of the Cup. Too many goals conceded that shouldn't have been.

The Cup game was away at Sinjuns. This proved interesting as the "Club" ref, (he was serving badly behind the bar after the game as well,) made a couple of interesting decisions. We had Matt Benedict sent off for dissent. The referee insisted he was being sworn at. In fact it was a Sinjuns player being sworn at, which of course is OK as it's Sinjuns. Matt complained to the referee that he'd misunderstood, as did I and in fact even some of the Sinjuns players complained that this was the case, but alas, to no avail. He was off. Matt is quite misunderstood you know.

Two minutes later a Sinjuns player swore so loudly that for a moment you couldn't hear the car traffic by the side of the pitch, and the referee turned around and said, "I'll pretend that I didn't hear that." We were drawing 1-1 at the time when Matt was sent off, and we lost in extra time. What tactics can overcome a referee like that?

Come January, and having won only three games, I wondered if any of the team would come back and turn out. They did and what a different season it turned out to be. Football is much more enjoyable when you're winning.

We didn't lose in January and, in total for the rest of the season, we won seven and drew one out of our last nine games. What a complete turnaround. There were some superb individual goals and great moves that led to goals. What a difference a little confidence makes.

Jason Quinn hit a couple against Sinjuns at home that flew into the side netting from around 30 yards out, although one was wrongly disallowed. Mike Healy won us a game with a great individual effort, from well outside the area, that really deserved filming. These were definitely goal of the season strikes.

Two players played in every game. Carl McLoughlin and Andre Joseph, and there can't be that many players in the Club who turned out every week for the Club. Great commitment.

Bill Stewart was nearly ever present and managed to grab a goal from open play. Sam Vennart showed a great deal of skill in the centre of the park and even managed to pick up player of the season.

There were some less regular performances from Giggie, Andy Brannon, Tom Benedict, Adam Price, Thomas Proxa, Martin Donald and Gary McGuire. A mixture of injury, changing circumstances and movement from other teams, saw valuable but restricted performances here.

We managed to complete our fixtures well ahead of anyone else, and it was noticeable that we were the only Club to meet the fixture requirements, perhaps to our own detriment.

I remember the heavy, driving rain in Barnes. The pitch was almost impossible to find and Fulham Compton forgot to show us the way. But, sadly, after a search party was sent out, we did find it. We had most of the possession, scored two own goals and it was a bizarre game to lose. I even had to wash the kit!

Thanks to all those who helped out and played during the season. Thanks to Bernie Marquis for help with players and his goal keeping expertise! Thanks also to Spencer McGuire for his constant support and suggestions.

After a difficult season to manage and it being my last as Captain, I was very pleased to receive the Clubman of the Year award. This made all my efforts, over the last four years, seem very worthwhile and I was glad that I turned up for the End of Season awards!

But finally, what of Adie DeCoursey's bet? Well you know the answer if you were at the End of Season awards. It all came down to the last game. I think that Adie was three or four goals short on the last game. He had loads of chances and could have won his bet, but only bagged two goals. Humbly, and despite being our top scorer, he handed over £10 to Dave at the End of Season Awards.

Cheers, now for the cricket, Will Annison

5th XI 2004 - 2005

2004-5 has been what is known, in the trade, as a "transitional season" for the 5s, although I don't want to claim anything as ambitious (or committed) as the usual accompaniment, the "5 year plan". I knew on taking over that outgoing skipper Dave Nix was departing for pastures less green-and-blue, but I didn't realise that I would need an entire new defence (apart from the ever-reliable Pete Stephens, who has made a smooth transition to centre-back, realising that there are strikers to be kicked all along our back line) and most of a midfield, all while playing 2 divisions higher than last season.

Fortunately, a few old players have returned to the fold. Frank Cornelli and Luke Tope have had limited opportunities in recent seasons but have given us stability at full-back, and Frank has also brought his son Cesare to play a few excellent games in goal. Gordon McCarthy was a big loss when he set off for South America halfway through the season – he promises to come back eventually, so get your orders in now for "souvenirs" – but recruited his own replacement in brother Errol, though referees and oppositions alike everywhere will be pleased that they only managed a couple of games together in central midfield. We also welcomed back Alex Gonzalez and Tony Radwan, the latter sharing the left wing with Mark Weyers, their consistency was a huge bonus.

Last season's goal machines Dave Faulkner and Orrin Pollard both missed too much of the season due to injury, so we have been greatly indebted to top scorer Colin Brown. The experience of Colin and fellow evergreen Joe Davorn have been vital to us both on and off the field, and my thanks go to them for their help in running the side, as well as to the 30-odd other players I don't have room to mention. We finished seventh this season but put in some really good performances along the way and never so much as flirted with the lower end of the table. Next season, with a year together under our belts and, hopefully, better luck with injuries down the spine of the team, I think we have the makings of a good side. Watch this space.

Paul Reeve

C.O.X.A. Tour 2005 – Ljubljana, Slovenia 28th April – 2nd May

This year's tour was to Ljubljana, the capital city of Slovenia, population 280,000. Slovenia is in the heart of Europe between the Alps, the Adriatic and the Pannonian Plain with Austria to the north, Italy to the west, Hungary to the east and Croatia to the south, Slovenia has always been a crossroads for trans-European routes and now the Clapham Boys are here.

This year's tourists were, Vic Roszkowski, Dave Leathem, John Pettley, Dan Condon, John Mansi, Joe Mansi, Joe Davorn, Bill Stewart, Colin Brown, Steve Parker, Mick O'Sullivan, Adie DeCoursey, Jimmy Burke, Jim Sanderson, Dave Faulkner, Graham Crossley, Steve Pagett, Steve Gordon, Rich Rooney, Alex McPherson and Will Annison.

We all met first at Liverpool Street to get the connection to Stanstead to fly to Ljubljana where we arrived 4:30pm local time. Again, the traditional slurp at the airport while Mad Boy worked out the sleeping arrangements. Mini cabs then to the 2 star Tibor Hotel, a five minute walk from the city centre. Quick check in and then meet downstairs.

We strolled into Ljubljana, having a drink or two on the way and stumbled across a lovely restaurant. Our first evening in Ljubljana was a pleasant one, a beautiful warm summer evening alongside the River Ljubljanica where there were several bars which spread off the several bridges the city had to offer. One of the bridges was called 'Three Bridges' and, as the name suggests, it was literally three bridges, linked to each other. The centre bridge was for traffic and the outer ones for pedestrians. This area tended to be the start point each evening.

We found a nice restaurant close by, plenty of steak and two or three veg washed down by several bottles of wine. Followed by a visit to one or two hostelrys.

The evening then starts getting a bit blurred. As the evening went on, Sully was starting to sway and decided to go back to the hotel. At the hotel reception, about 2:00am, he asked the concierge what his room number was because he couldn't remember it.

Concierge: "What is your name please?"

Sully: "O'Sullivvannn, . . . hic" The concierge checked his list.

Concierge: "Room 212, here is your key" Sully didn't recognise the room number.

Sully: "Are you sure this is my room?"

Concierge: "Yes, O'Sullivan, room 212!"

So Sully went up to his room, Sully gently put his head down and went off to sleep. The next thing he knows he is awakened by two very distraught South African fellas. "Oi, who the bloody hell are you, what are you doing in my bed? You are a robber, we are going to tell the police". I am sure one of them thought about the tale of Goldilocks and said who's been sleeping in my bed? Sully opened his eyes slowly, being barracked by the 'not so nice South African's'. Well, have you ever met a nice South African (Spitting Image)? Sully, in his response to being called a robber, said "If I was a robber, why am I sleeping over?" They all went downstairs where the concierge duly apologised, admitted his mistake to Sully and gave him the correct key.

Day two was quite a late start (Saturday morning). After breakfast we walked into town (Around midday). A small taverna, for all of us to whet our whistle, so to speak.