

AFC Wimbledon US Dons Newsletter

Issue 11 – May 2006

Contents:

US Dons – News

AFCW News

Guest Column

Fundraising Activities

Contacts

US Dons – News

One of our members, Steve Smith of California travelled back home in April and managed to get to the final league game of the season, the home game against Harrow and he witnessed a 2 – 1 victory and advancement to the playoffs. Steve got some good photos of the celebration and I think SoCal will be adding them to the US Dons website. Sadly Steve left before the playoff game against Fisher, but regardless had an enjoyable time. He was treated well by the home fans as can be evidenced in the photos.

SoCal (Dave Hambly) another California resident is planning to make a return trip for the Surrey Senior Cup Final against Kingstonian later on this month. Hopefully he will bring them the same luck he brought them last year and again celebrate the raising of the cup and toasting another season ending victory.

As many of you know, we have had several mentions from the WDON commentary team in response to our members participating in the chat room while listening to the game. It is encouraging to see so much support from the US contingent and the club is appreciative of our support.

It would be nice to get some of your comments on how you thought this last season played out. Are you happy with the results? Do you feel another season in the Ryman Premier League will provide us a stronger footing for the next campaign and better prepare the team for Conference football? It has been a meteoric rise over the last three seasons we can't expect to gain promotion every year without a season of consolidation. Do you feel Dave Anderson did a good job? Or do you feel the ever-revolving door played into the inconsistency of the team? What are your expectations for next year? Share your thoughts with the rest of the US Dons. Send your thoughts to me and we will print them during the off-season.

I have received several positive responses to again sponsoring a players kit for the next season. As I mentioned in the last newsletter, based on this past years pricing, with approximately 50 members, it would cost us about \$10 each to sponsor a kit for next year. For those of you who have not yet responded drop us an e-mail on your thoughts. Being several thousand miles away from the action, we are unable to help in other ways with the fundraising efforts the club performs. This is an easy and relatively cheap way to show our continued support of OUR club.

For one of the upcoming newsletters, I am considering putting in a poll of our membership. Some of the questions would be:

Are you an AFCW stockholder? Are you a member of the Don's Trust?
Are you a member of WISA? How long have you been a Don's Supporter?
I have other questions, but would like to ask you to offer some other ideas for your questions.

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.

We won't have Radio WDON to listen too over the next few months, but we can always keep in touch with the latest news by signing on to the chat-room. Don's supporters around the world sign on and share their views. The e-mail address is listed later on in this newsletter.

Stay in touch.....

“Come on you DON'S”

Hot Off the Press: Braintree & Fisher are promoted. AFCW lose out at Fisher 2 – 1. MK Don's were relegated to the 2nd division.

You can reach me:

via e-mail: davgarlinge@aol.com,

phone: (281) 482-6034

mail: 206 Winding Road, Friendswood, TX 77546

David Garlinge
(Limeydg).

AFCW News

A strong finish saw the Don's move up to a fourth place finish in the league and a position in the playoff picture for promotion to the Conference South. Unfortunately, we fell at the first hurdle. Falling 2 – 1 to Fisher. After our strong showing against Fisher in the league, we won both games 1 – 0, there was some expectations of a better result. We were unable to field our strongest side, due to suspensions and injuries, but the team played their hearts out and put in a good showing. As always we had strong support and the supporters played their part in trying to furnish the result we all wanted. It was not to be and on the night the better team won.

Regardless of this the result, we can look back on another fine season for AFCW. The overall level of football played in the Premier league is superior to the first division and after two promotions in two years, finishing in the playoffs at the first opportunity was a worthy effort. This will hopefully prepare us for a better season next year. Allow the team on the pitch to consolidate and give the club another year to reduce the debt and provide a more stable financial picture and prepare us better for a successful foray into the higher divisions (where we can expect higher expenses).

We still have the Surrey Senior Cup final to look forward to! We meet Kingstonian at the Woking ground the second week of May. We took this cup home last season and it would be a fitting end to this season to retain the cup and some solace for not gaining promotion.

Braintree United was the walk-away winners of the league and gained automatic promotion. The runner-up position, and promotion, will be decided this weekend between Fisher and Hampton & Richmond (who beat Heybridge in the other round 1 playoff, in the penalty shoot-out following a draw after extra time).

Some player news: Shane Smeltz was informed by the New Zealand management he was selected for a friendly match in June, where New Zealand would be playing Brazil in a friendly game in Switzerland. Part of Brazil's tune up for the World Cup. When informed of the date, Shane almost broke down as he said he could not make the game due to some family commitments. When asked by the New Zealand coach if it was not something he could break, Shane said it was not He is getting married on that day! He must be in love! Who else would give up a once in a lifetime opportunity to play against Brazil?

Guest Column:

THE 'VOICE' OF WDON

AN INTERVIEW WITH MIKEY 'T' TALIADOROS

Mikey T, how long have you been following the Dons (unbroken run of matches seen) and what are your greatest memories, the games, the players?

My first game was at Plough Lane against Bury in February 1980, in the old 3rd division. Bury were bottom, we were second bottom, and Bury won 1-0 to go above us. I remember remarking to my dad during the game that it wasn't the best I had ever seen (even at the age of 9!). At the end of the 1988-89 season, one of my mates and I decided to go to every game the following season, as it was the Dons centenary. This we achieved, but my mate broke his run in September 1990, whereas I carried on! The last game I missed was at Manchester United in May 1989, and have seen every home and away domestic competitive game since then, both as Wimbledon until May 2002 and then AFC Wimbledon. The 2-1 away win against Harrow Borough was game number 862 in a row.

Lee Willett question: What is your favourite moment as a Dons supporter outside the game?

So many great journeys, sing-songs & piss-ups. Even the numerous protests we undertook over the years engendered a real sense of togetherness. From a personal perspective, being part of the winning Dons team that beat 107 other sets of fans to win the ITV Digital channel football quiz show "*Do I Not Know That*", was a huge buzz. (Especially when I got round to enjoying my prize, a week in Las Vegas!)

Tell us how Radio WDON came about and how did you get together with Jonesy to form the commentary team. What were your objectives?

It all started at the Brimsdown Rovers cup game in September 2002 as an experimental broadcast, the brainchild of Chris Philips, assisted by Matt Couper. I think Jonesy was also in there somewhere, as I remember him coming down to stand with us on the West Bank for the penalty shoot-out! The initial broadcast went remarkably well and was also very well received, people were tuning in from all over the place. So it's carried on ever since! I'd known Chris previously and he asked me to join the commentary team for the North Greenford United league game, 3 days later. I'd also known Jonesy for a while, as we'd been involved in the writing & production of a couple of fanzines, and we were also team-mates for Sunday League Dons tribute side, Carlton Fairweather FC! Initially there were no objectives as it was just a test broadcast, and, by and large, there still are none, other than to inform, and to entertain wherever possible. I'll leave you guys to comment on whether this is what comes across over the internet airwaves! But I like to think that Jonesy & myself work well as a commentary double act!

For you, what has been the effect of Radio WDON for Dons' supporters, both at home and overseas?

It's a real pleasure to be part of a service that allows commentary of all our home games to be heard by Dons fans wherever they are, from whom the feedback has been very positive indeed, as it keeps them in touch in the best possible way. But, thanks to the internet guestbooks (first Weird and Wonderful World, and now the Womble Underground Press) it's not a case of people just sitting there listening, it's become a fully interactive experience and makes people feel an even bigger part of it. It's a real buzz whilst commentating to see & read out the comments from all over the world, especially when new listeners join us for the first time!

Tell us some of the amusing anecdotes of your work on WDON. Some of the strangest things you've seen at KM?

A lot of the stuff that's amused me has been contained within the commentary itself. For example, Jonesy could make a pun out of the name of a player or a club, then I'd follow suit, then he'd carry on with another & it has been known to become like a quickfire word association. In the game where Kevin Cooper broke Eddie Reynolds' record of goals scored in one season, Chris said over the PA, "Tell Eddie Reynolds his record has gone!", something that most of the Dons at the ground quickly pointed out might be a tad tricky, given that the legendary Mr Reynolds is no longer with us. Jonesy has come out with some cracking metaphors, the best recent one being after the last-gasp equaliser that earned a 1-1 home draw with the leaders Braintree... "like an asthmatic Lottery winner spending an whole 24 hours in a brothel, Kingsmeadow is absolutely breathless!" This season the Redbridge home game was almost abandoned by thick fog, and it was certainly a spectacular sight, something we did our best to convey to the listeners. It was also a great pleasure to interview the legendary Hans Segers on WDON during half-time of the Fleet Town game in November 2004, on the night when we equalled the English senior football record of 75

league games unbeaten. Especially as it gave me the chance to refer to him by his full name.... Johannes Antonius Cornelius Segers!

Lee Willett asks: How do you cope with your celebrity status as one of the most well-known Dons fans? He is a legend, for his unbeaten run of matches attended, for his outrageous memory on dates/results, his WDON commentator status, and for his regular leading of a pub full of drunk Dons fans in singing 'Everywhere we go.'

I just enjoy having met so many other Dons fans over the years, many of whom are still there at AFC. As for the "Everywhere We Go" song, it was a great buzz for many years, but I haven't done it since Tranmere away at Christmas 2000.

Where are you placed in the debate about AFC: Do you want AFC to find its way into the Football League or are you content to have non-league football to watch each week in season given the trauma of the MK Dons split?

I'd love it if we regained our Football League place, as this is a big part of what was stolen by the FA and the idiots who ran the club. But that's not to say we're not enjoying the non-league experience. Having to start again at the bottom of the football ladder is something that has been accepted very well by the AFC fans, mainly because there have been many enjoyable games and days out in the last 4 years, with the level of competition not detracting from them in the slightest.

What is your view of the MK Dons. Do you care if they shrivel up and die, or do you have a desire to one day see AFC play them and beat them and go past them?

Utter scum. A complete footballing abomination.. My immediate hope is for their relegation this season, and again next season, and every season after that until they can sink no lower. Or even better, to go out of business altogether, as soon as possible. I'm not sure about wanting to play them, as it would cause divisions amongst the AFCW support as to how we'd approach the attendance or non-attendance of the match. But hopefully a swift, inevitable bankruptcy and closure for the Franchise, will prevent that becoming any more than a hypothetical "what if?" scenario.

How do you rate Dave Anderson as a manager. What are his strengths/weaknesses. His tactics/player recruitment?

Given the amount of pressure and expectation, I think he's doing very well. A few of his signings have attracted criticism (some deservedly so), but there's no doubt he's unearthed some real gems and I believe that the good has far outweighed the not-quite-so-good. He's well known and respected as a manager, not just in non-league circles, which in turn means he's well connected, and that has proved extremely handy when we've needed to sign a player on loan and at short notice, for example Jay Conroy from Crystal Palace. There are times when our tactics aren't suited to the players we are fielding in a particular game, or to the tactics/formation of the opposition, but this can be as much down to players not performing to the best of their ability. This is the Ryman Premier division after all.... there were a number of Premiership games I can recall when things went tits up, with players who were full-time professionals! Sometimes people forget the AFC players have to combine their playing & training commitments with full-time jobs. Dave knows the Ryman Premier division like the back of his hand. But once the ref blows the whistle, there isn't much more he can do.

Lee Willett asks: Do the Dons fans moan too much? Are we too engrossed with being a family club when our support is just like anybody else's?

I think we're similar to most other football fans, we're happy when we win and not so happy when we lose... although some are possibly a bit too unhappy at times, especially when the bigger picture suggests that things aren't that bad after all! For example, the 4-0 defeat at Walton & Hersham last season. Yes, it was an extremely bad day at the office and the performance was widely & justifiably criticised, I know I certainly did! But what concerned me was that instead of taking heart that it was just a one-off, and that although we hadn't clinched the title, just 2 points from the remaining 4 games would do so, there were suggestions that certain players weren't up to it anymore and should go! Everyone's entitled their opinion, especially as AFC Wimbledon is all about emphasising the fans' right to have their say, something that goes very much with the territory of being a fans-owned club.

Your memory of Dons' results/matches/incidents is legend. Give us an insight into how you've built up this encyclopedic memory of Wimbledon. What do you put it down to. Or are you just anal-retentive.

It's simply down to having a photographic memory. There's an awful lot of junk floating around up there! It's a handy thing to have, particularly for settling arguments, but the down side is the retention of

memories from games such as Shrewsbury away in the FA Cup, the 6-1 loss at Newcastle in 1995, and of course the relegation game at Southampton!

What is your best all-time Dons' team?

How about the following, in a 4-4-2 formation. It's not necessarily the best Dons line-up I've seen, but they'd certainly have given anyone a game. Obviously it has a largely 1980s & 1990s flavour, as these were very much the glory years in terms of FA Cup & top-flight success: Dave Beasant, Kenny Cunningham, John Scales, Andy Thorn, Nigel Winterburn, Dennis Wise, Warren Barton, Robbie Earle, Marcus Gayle, John Fashanu, Alan Cork. Subs: Hans Segers, Roger Joseph, Matt Everard, Michael Hughes, Dean Holdsworth. Manager: Dave Bassett.

What does the future hold for AFC and Radio Wdon? For AFC, continuation and representation of the original spirit of the Dons, regardless of the division we're playing in. For Radio WDON, to carry on broadcasting the gospel on a truly global scale, until such time that someone tells us to shut up! There's nothing planned, but as we progress, I'd imagine the demand would increase for us to cover at least some of the away games.

This interview was given by Mikey "T" to WDSA (Dons Downunder). Many thanks to Mikey "T" and Robert Smith for sharing this with us.

For next month I have another article, provided by Robert, sharing a fan's view of the Dinner with Dave Bassett, another fundraising effort put on by the club. It makes good reading.

As always ... I am pleading with you all to share your thoughts and send in some anecdotes for future use in this newsletter.

Fundraising Activities

As mentioned earlier in this newsletter, it is time to begin thinking about if we want to again “Sponsor a Player’s Kit” for next year. Based on last year’s cost, 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!

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.

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.

David Garlinge (Limeydg)
206 Winding Road
Friendswood, Texas 77546
e-mail: davgarlinge@aol.com
phone: (281) 482-6034

Dave Hambly (SoCalDon)
Burbank, CA.
e-mail: dave@usdons.com

Nic McJannett (Carolina Don)
Charlotte, NC
e-mail: nicmcj@aol.com

Robert Smith (WDSA)
Australia
e-mail: wdsa@optusnet.com.au

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>