

AFC Wimbledon US Dons Newsletter

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US Dons – News

Not too much news regarding the US Don's. I was back home for a couple of weeks, to see the Trophy game against Gravesend, which I am sure you are all aware didn't happen. Instead I got to see two well deserved victories against Tonbridge and Bromley. The Bromley game produced the largest crowd of the season at Kingsmeadow and the fans were treated to a fast paced end to end attacking game. A saved penalty by Little and a brace of goals from new signing Ferguson were the highlights of the game. When I returned, I had a few e-mails about the state of our FA Trophy demise and the possible loss of 18 points in the league. All were unhappy with the decisions and bewildered by the penalties against the club.

We can help to try and make a difference by joining the mail campaign to the FA and the Ryman League. Details are posted in the news section of the official web-site with the addresses to send our "nice" comments. Let's let the authorities know how well supported this club is. I know from talking to people while I was there that responses are being mailed from several European and Scandinavian countries, it would be nice to get additional ones from Canada and the USA. Let them know that there is more to the US contingent than Beckham joining some LA team!

Support for our cause is even being championed in the several of the national daily papers. The Sun, the Mail, the People and the News of the World all carried articles on Wimbledon's fate and were comparing it to the lenient treatment of Premiership clubs like West Ham and Liverpool over the Argentine duo fiasco. All indicated a rule for the rich clubs of the Premiership and a different rule for the smaller clubs. Most even debated the move of Wimbledon to Milton Keynes and how this latest twist was yet another blow to a fabled club whose history dates back to the 1890's. If nothing else comes of this and we once again will seal a lot of limelight for the team.

Our local MP has even tabled a motion in the Houses of Parliament over the unfairness of the treatment for a minor administrative failure. A request that the Sports minister intervene has even been suggested.

Suffice it to say it was an interesting trip, and I even got 3 inches of snow for a day, in Wimbledon.

One other sad note to relay, Plough Lane has suffered it's final desecration! The building on our famous turf has begun. Five sections of flats have begun to rise and were sitting at about 10 stories. I took some pictures and will publish them for you all to see. They removed the old office building and

have the whole block up to the Durnsford Road industrial estate. We could have had a fine stadium in that expanse of land. Thank You Sam Hamman for your greed and the way you treated our club. Charles Koppel took most of the stick for our club's demise, but let us not forget who really started the destruction of our club. It was Sam the Man, who delighted in our famous Wembley victory, who sold the ground and took us to a ground-share at Crystal Palace. It was Sam the Man who pocketed all the cash from a sale that should never have occurred based upon the covenants the Black family left with the borough council for the use of the land our club played on. It is a sad sight, and one I could ramble on for several pages, but I won't. I won't because our club will never die. We have suffered at the hands of Hamman, Koppel, Winkler and the gutless Football League and now the wrath of the FA, the Ryman League and just this week the Surrey FA (with our expulsion from the Surrey Senior Cup). Yet like the EverReady Bunny, we keep on running. We will keep going and regain our rightful place. The football team is showing the proof of their resolve with a super run in the league that sees us at the top of the league. The fans are proving their resolve with money and their continued support. We will survive.

As always, we are looking for input from any of you. Any tid-bits to share, history of yourselves or the club that other members would find entertaining. Do you have any old memorabilia, that may interest your fellow Dons supporters, or any other tidbit that might interest your fellow supporters, please send them to me and I will get it published. E-mail your responses to me at: davgarlinge@aol.com.

Don't forget to check out the club news on the official website. Also Paul Raymond's "Itmustbedons" website is a great source for Wimbledon news. For home games you can dial up "Radio Wdon" and listen to some interesting commentary as well as some interesting and little known statistics. The web-sites are listed at the end of the newsletter.

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AFCW News

The football team is flying high with a string of victories behind that have put them in top spot (pending our appeal for the points' deduction). Back to back wins, against fellow contenders, has got us in this position. Despite several injuries to key players the team is displaying the strength of its depth of talent. A key acquisition has been loan signing of Ferguson from Woking. He has dropped down two divisions to play for us because "Wimbledon has a vision and is a club that knows where it wants to be". Goddard is a youth product who was thrust into the side due to the dearth of injuries to our forwards. What did he do? Come in and score 9 goals in January and get named as the Ryman Premier League "January golden boots" winner. These two players have been a major part in the revival of the Don's goalscoring. The early part of the season we relied heavily on our defense, and hoping for a single goal to get us the points. The last 6 weeks have seen an onslaught of goals. It bodes well for the run in to the end of the season. Our other forwards are close to return from injury, Richard Butler and Paul Barnes are both nearing full fitness. Our defense remains solid. Steve Butler has returned at an opportune time as Howard will be out for a few weeks with a broken nose. Paul Lorraine, another new signing, will anchor the defense with Butler. And last but not least is the best keeper in the league, Andy Little. Another fine penalty save in the Bromley game ensured our victory. A goal then would have tied the game, but immediately after his save, the Don's broke out and the scored the third goal, that put the game away. A late note, Ferguson was signed to a contract through the end of the season, just this week and Dave Anderson has vowed he will sign a further contract to ensure he stays with the club.

We must review the bad news:

1. We were thrown out of the FA Trophy and had to repay the winnings from the previous three rounds.
2. The Ryman League has imposed an eighteen point penalty deduction, which the club plans to appeal.
3. We have been kicked out of the Surrey Senior Cup.

All this because of a minor administrative error. Who would expect having to file an international clearance for an English player, who played for a club in an English league? Forget that he hadn't played this season until he signed for us. The error gets further compounded because the "error" isn't identified until 21 games have passed, and then only because he is booked! Had he been a dirty player we would not have been penalized as heavily as

we are now. What would have been a meritorious season may now end in a season of futility. However, we can look back and savour our successes even though we will not reap the benefits of the victories. If Gravesend win the FA Trophy, we can become the only team to not lose an FA Trophy game yet not receive the cup! The same could be true of the Surrey Senior cup if the “Met” win that trophy. Failing a successful appeal, we could have the points to win the Ryman Premier League, yet still be in the same league next season. I’m sure the Ryman league won’t be sorry to see us still in their league! With our promotion to the Nationwide South, their attendances would once again fall to mediocrity! Why wouldn’t they penalize us heavily so they can ensure our continued support to buoy their league?

Luckily, even if we receive the full eighteen point deduction, the team has already ensured (almost certainly) we will not be relegated from the premier league. With the full eighteen point deduction, a playoff berth this season is probably beyond our reach, even if the results from here on out go our way. With the recent on-pitch displays and the finding of a potent goalscoring threat, Dave Anderson should have ensured his tenure through next season. If for nothing else his ability to bring in quality players.

The club as a whole continues to do well. The crowds, while not as large as we would like continue to average around 2,500+. The fundraising efforts continue to flourish. The next big thing is “A dinner with Lawrie Sanchez”. That should be a barnstormer, I wish I were there for that!

The financial picture would look even sweeter had we kept the winnings from the FA Trophy and possibly received more had we been able to keep our interest in the competition alive! A minimum of 12,000 pounds has been taken from us! Regardless, our wins in the earlier rounds of the Trophy and our FA Cup victories ensured additional income.

Let’s keep the faith!

COME ON YOU DON’S

Guest Column:

This item appeared in the Daily Telegraph on January 20th 2007, following our FA Trophy victory over Gravesend and Northfleet. A result that was later invalidated, due to AFC Wimbledon fielding an ineligible player, and the passage to the next round awarded to Gravesend.

Fans help AFC Wimbledon on road to recovery

By Ricky George

Last Updated: 12:47am GMT 20/01/2007

The extraordinary story of AFC Wimbledon entered another chapter after Saturday's 1-0 FA Trophy second-round victory at Gravesend & Northfleet.

With their hosts riding high in the Nationwide Conference National, the Ryman Premier side, who won at Aldershot Town in the previous round, provided the 37-year-old competition with a major upset when striker Roscoe D'Sane struck from close range in the 56th minute.

It had been a titanic struggle from the start, despite the fact that two divisions of the non-league pyramid separate the clubs. The teams were matched evenly, and with the wind relenting to a mere 50mph, the Stonebridge Road crowd of 2,016 witnessed a lightning-fast encounter.

Yet it was the visiting supporters, packed into the open Swanscombe end, who made the most noise; if ever a club owed a debt to their fans it is AFC Wimbledon. It was those same supporters who founded the club in May 2002, when the owners of Wimbledon FC were granted permission to relocate to Milton Keynes, 70 miles north of London SW19, where the club began as Wimbledon Old Centrals FC in 1899.

With the original club defunct, AFC Wimbledon regard themselves as the direct continuation of the Dons or 'Crazy Gang', whose rise from amateur football to FA Cup glory and the Premiership remains the game's most remarkable achievement of modern times. Wimbledon, eight-times winners of the old Isthmian League, turned professional in 1964 and joined the Southern League.

After spectacular FA Cup runs and three successive League Championships, the Dons were elected to the Football League in 1977. They were then promoted or relegated in every season from 1979 to 1984, before reaching the old First Division in 1986. Two years later they astounded the football world by beating Liverpool 1-0 at Wembley to win the FA Cup.

As founder members of the Premier League in 1991-92, Wimbledon left their historic Plough Lane stadium and shared Crystal Palace's Selhurst Park. Relegation in 2000 was the beginning of the end; the original club went into administration soon after the move to Milton Keynes.

Since 2002, in a reincarnation of their former selves, AFC Wimbledon have climbed quickly up the ladder of non-league football. Beginning in the Combined Counties League, the team remained unbeaten in their second season to win promotion to the Ryman Isthmian League First Division.

In 2004-05, under Dave Anderson, the new manager, AFC led the division all season to return to the Isthmian Premier for the first time since 1963. During this period the fledgling club have had an average attendance of more than 2,000 at the appropriately named 'Fans Stadium', in Kingston-upon-Thames, with nearly as many travelling to away games.

Last season, aiming to gain promotion to the Conference South, Wimbledon lost in the play-offs to Fisher Athletic, but are within touching distance of a similar position this term. Anderson's team have conceded only 18 league goals all season, and it was this strength in depth that frustrated Gravesend's young, talented side on Saturday.

A delighted Anderson shook his head in wonder at the club's fans. "A big club is judged by how many supporters it brings in," he said. "They're absolutely priceless. They give you fresh legs – they always do. It's a story that will never be repeated, and it will continue long after I've gone. We've just taken another little step today."

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Fundraising Activities

With the Barclay's loan now being in effect, regular monthly payments are being paid, unlike the irregular payments we made to pay the Khosla loan.

It is time for us to stand up and do our part in helping to reduce this debt.

With the holiday season beginning, it may be time to re-invent the US Don's diet, or at least prepare for it in the New Year. The two that have run previously were well received and contributed greatly to the fundraising effort. What do you say to another one?

There have been a couple of E-Bay auctions of Don's memorabilia, courtesy of SoCalDon. Does anyone have some interesting memorabilia that could induce some big spenders to help the cause?

Last year we sponsored a kit, this year we didn't. Let's get our heads together and set about sponsoring a kit for next year. With 50+ members, it would be less than \$10 per head to do.

These are just a few ideas, does anyone have any other ideas of how we can show support of our club?

Send in your suggestions and let's show the club they have our support.

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 (Old Centrals): <http://www.afcwgb.co.uk/gb.php>