

2006-2007

Men's Club

Women's Club

(Last update 4 June 2006)

Men's

Norwich Union Mens Lower X1 at Harleston Tournament

7/5/07

Norwich Union were drawn in Pool A and began with 3 goalless draws in their first three games on grass against Bury A,Ipswich and Harleston with the defence and Robbie in goal looking comfortable.Chances were being created but the finishing touch could not be found. Then in the teams first astro game Union beat Theford 2-1(after a tactical change) after trailing 1-0, with the goals from a short corner strike from Trig and a close range goal from Will Kirby.This left the team needing a scoring draw or a win in our last pool game against the group leaders who had won their previous 4 games to finish runners-up in the pool.After going 1-0 down after a forwards deflection then hit Pentin's foot and went past Robbie an equaliser was scored by Mike Banham from a short corner and a 1-1 draw was secured. In the semi the team played Market Deeping who were from a higher level and they soon went ahead 2-0 and then the game became bad tempered and though the team pressed hard the score stayed the same at the final whistle.Despite the wet weather it was good fun and an enjoyable experience for all the players.

Squad:Robbie Whiting, Mike Banham,Glenn Tobias, David Pentin, Patrick VanEerten, Clay Hamilton, Will Kirby, Tom Banham, Alan Quinton, Trig, Matt Willson, Ollie Ireland.

Division 4NE

23/3/07

Norwich City III 0

Norwich Union III 3

Report from Norwich City Website :

City concluded their season in nailbiting fashion and following a 3-0 defeat at the hands of Union left the pitch thinking that they may have blown their chances of promotion. City went into the match as league leaders one point ahead of second placed Cranes and three points ahead of third placed Sudbury and a superior goal difference to Sudbury by six goals. In an even match both sides created chances but City failed to convert any of theirs, unusually failing from their many short corners whilst Union converted three of their chances. After the final whistle news filtered through that Gorleston had beaten second placed Cranes and that Sudbury's opposition had failed to fulfil their fixture and that Sudbury were awarded a 3-0 win. This meant that City and Sudbury were promoted with both teams now having the same goal difference, however by virtue of scoring 87 goals to Sudburys 72 City III's were promoted as league champions.

Division 5NE

23/3/07

Norwich Union IV 4

Bury St.Edmunds IV 0

Union went into their last league match of the season knowing a win would ensure they finished fourth.The early stages of the game saw Union struggle to come to terms with the Bury attacking formation of four forwards.On attack Union were getting a lot of space and time but were being frustrated by good performances by the Bury centre back and the novice goalkeeper.The stalemate was finally broken when the team's top scorer Alan Quinton fired home to make it 1-0 and this was the score at half-time. After a few words at half-time Union came out determined to finish the season off with a good second half performance.After more pressure Union continued to go close but not manage to find the net and Chris Millar in the Union goal made a couple of vital saves to prevent Bury drawing level.Union finally gave themselves some breathing space when Chris Harrison fired home from the top of the D.A third goal was scored when Tom Banham fired home a hard low shot past the keeper. On full-time Bury were awarded a penalty flick when a Union player stopped the ball in front of goal with his foot.A great save by Chris Millar his second consecutive flick save ensured Union kept a clean sheet and ended the season with a positive goal difference to go along with fourth place.

Division 5NE

10/3/07

Norwich Union IV 4

Cranes II 1

Union made a good start to the game putting their opponents under pressure and building up attacks with phases of passing.An early chance arrived when a penalty flick was awarded but the Cranes goalkeeper saved this.As the half went on Cranes began to exert some pressure with quick breaks as gaps appeared between the Union midfield and defence and a few anxious moments were endured.Union opened the scoring before the break with a short corner strike into the corner of the goal from Mike Banham. In the second half Union continued to have the majority of the play and took advantage of this with a reverse stick finish from Matt Willson to open a two goal lead.This lead was further increased when Alan Quinton collected the ball outside the D and dribbled into the D with a powerful run and drilled the ball into the goal with a crisp shot. Cranes continued to try to get back into the game and Andel Williams who had been causing Union problems with his speedy dribbling pulled a goal back from close range.A timely tackle from Mike Banham ensured Cranes did not score a second goal.Union made the game safe just before the end with Mike Banham converting another short corner. An excellent team performance by Union moved them up to 6th and gives the opportunity to finish in 4th place if this level is repeated in the final 2 games of the season. Special mention of the strong individual performances of Andy Key on the right side of midfield and a solid defensive display by Ray Hansell.

Division 5NE

24/2/07

Norwich Union IV 3

Sudbury III 0

Union made an excellent start to the match dominating the early exchanges and creating numerous chances however the killer finishing touch could not be found to take advantage of this spell of play. Towards the end of the half the early exertions began to catch up with the Union players and the speed of their game dropped and Udbury came more into the game but the game remained goalless at halftime. The second half resumed with Union reverting back to the way they had started the match but this time they took advantage of their pressure when they opened the scoring with an Andy Kemp shot through a group of players. Union doubled their lead when Tom Banham reacted quickest to a loose ball from a saved shot from a short corner to turn the ball in. The Union defence held firm as Sudbury tried to get back into the game and just before the end Union added a third after the forwards robbed the Sudbury defence and fed Patrick Vaneerten who lifted the ball over the goalkeeper and into the net to give a well deserved 3-0 win which lifted Union above their opponents in the league and up to 6th place.

Division 4NE

24/2/07

Felixstowe II 1

Norwich Union III 3

Close fought game won by the better passing side. Union's defence was well marshalled by George, and thus the lead was always secure.

Division 2N

24/2/07

Norwich Union II 1

Cambridge University III 3

Tough game against a fit young side. Two quick goals killed off the game.

Division 1

24/2/07

Saffron Walden 4

Norwich Union 2

The early list of 14 players this week was soon whittled down so that by Friday night we were travelling with only 12 (11.5 with the sub-par health of the skipper). Special thanks to Richard Moulson for agreeing to play when he'd rather not have!

A fairly sociable 11am meet at Pinebanks was soon thrown into pandemonium as the skipper realised he'd left the shirts in Taverham. The first car was quickly filled and dispatched for a detour. It's likely most of the other players rolled in late – the usual do – but for once it wasn't recorded. The journey to Newport, near Saffron Walden was uneventful and the team arrived in lots of time for conversation in the dressing room and the captain's briefing. Once the warm-up was moved from the main car-park thoroughfare it went pretty much to plan. The team arrived pitchside just as the game before ended and worked up to match pace with the infamous 'Cross of Death' sprint routine before passing and Jim-killing were brushed up. Union started with the wind at their backs and the captain croakily exhorting them onwards from the bench in between paroxysms of coughing.

So what went wrong? Saffron Walden played a very bold style pushing lots of players forward and then retreating en masse through the middle of the park to slow down counter-attacks. This left the wings very exposed at times. It was obvious early on why Saffron Walden have such high scoring games! Walden opened the scoring quite early on after a period of domination and soon had a second 'goal' disallowed after it went in off a striker's arm (I think that was the reason). Union finally found their feet a bit but conceded again twice before finally finishing through Tom Bell.

Despite not coming on until 30 minutes in, the captain found himself on the brink of a card as Union started to grumble rather too much about some of the decision, particularly at the end they were attacking. Not a smart move when that's your end in the second half boys! Half time brought a useful discussion about Walden's tactics and play afterwards was much better. Union had a 15 minute period of ascendancy where there were plenty of chances to bring the game towards parity. Chris Simmonds fired one in just wide of the post, which a defender graciously turned into his own net, but Walden managed to force a short corner in despite Jim getting a stick to it. The latter stages were marred by Union's growing frustration. Goals weren't forthcoming despite some good possession and the umpire at the defensive end was seeing intent in tackles that were just clumsy. Simmo finally said too much after a high ball left its mark and was dispatched to the corner. End result Saffron Walden 4 – Union 2.

Division 5NE

17/2/07

Norfolk Nomads 0

Norwich Union IV 0

Union started the game with some good news after hearing from the league that they had been awarded the previous weeks game 3-0 due to City's strengthening of their side with players from a higher team. Unfortunately Union's umpire failed to turn up as he was suffering from flu and couldn't contact the captain as the contact details were wrong in the fixture card, so a player had to umpire forcing a reshuffle and the team only having a bare eleven. A match where both sides cancelled each other out and chances were a rarity with defences on top and both sides struggling with the heat and Union also with the lack of substitutes. Union had one good chance which was pushed wide from close range and though Nomads had several short corners they failed to trouble the Union goalkeeper. A good performance in defence by Glenn Tobias in his first game back after a lengthy spell out due to injury.

Division 4NE

17/2/07

Norwich Union III 0

Sudbury II 3

Close fought 1st half, missed flick saw Union go in 1-0 down. 2nd half was all Union with numerous short corners being won but sadly none converted. A Sudbury breakaway & some generous defending saw Sudbury take a 2-0 lead, after this the game was won.

Division 1

17/2/07

Norwich Union 3

Old de Ferrians 0

A home game, against a struggling opposition. Should be ours to take. Was it going to be that easy?

With a squad of 13, Union looked fairly strong. The continued absence of Robbie 'under the thumb' Kay led to a decision by the skipper to place himself in the centre back position to leave the rest of the defence unchanged. Simmonds returned to left midfield allowing Oli Browne to go up front. The other Browne brother returned from skiing, initially bolstering the bench as did Neil 'Spender' Harrison. After a suitable warm-up union began the game. The opposition inexplicably chose to play into the sun and gifted us the start and the first few minutes saw pressure on the Old De Ferrian defence. A short corner flick was well saved but union looked to have the upper hand. What actually happened was union mentally

wrote off their opponents and spent the rest of the half charging down the middle and hitting hopeful balls. One of these punts at the oppo finally paid off as the ball was played in smartly by Oli for Tom to take a reverse stick swipe at. Edd showed Tom how to aim the same technique at goal and we were leading. During the half ODF did manage to make a few chances but the best - a dangerous cross to the goal-hanging forward - missed everyone and Jim was equal to all the rest. A 1-0 lead at half time was probably about right. The half time talk was aimed at getting the home team to start playing some hockey and there were a few signs that things might have picked up. The ball moved wider more and runs were made into the corner or the pitch. Unfortunately, most of the chances petered out through poor touches or over-ambitious running with the ball and with ODF rarely troubling the half became rather dull (please can I play up front now). As the half progressed Alex bagged himself a goal as the ball levitated across the face and Oli added a final touch on another (unless you ask his brother who scored). Other chances were missed as a lack of incisive play and general malaise swept through the pitch with the halcyon conditions more suitable for parasols and pimm's. Somewhere along the lines Simmo managed to pick up a green card. Stupid Boy! Anyway, three valuable points for Union. Two hard away games to follow and every point helps. Union are now in relegation position on goals scored, equal on points with Bedford and Witham.

Division 4NE

10/2/07

Gorleston 1

Norwich Union III 3

Report from Gorleston Website - very fair & unbiased:

This was a vital game for Gorleston to win and with defeat probably goes their last chance for promotion this season. Despite fielding a strong team Gorleston never really got going until the second half and by then the game was beyond their reach. Played in steady drizzle Gorleston's first half performance was disappointing and they seemed unable to match the visitors better organization and eye for opportunities. Penned back in defence for much of the opening quarter Norwich Union's first goal was typical - a break down the right wing was covered but when the cross came Colin Birch nipped in front of his marker to give Barney King in goal no chance at close range. Still the Gorleston forward line were unable to make an impression and tempers flared briefly before half-time when the visitors were awarded a second goal. A shot from outside the circle appeared to go through a crowd of players untouched into the net but the second umpire on the far touchline insisted Union's Richard Draeger had got a deflection on the ball inside and after a lengthy conference with his colleague a goal was awarded.

Immediately after the interval the visitors struck again with their best and the decisive goal. Cley Hamilton made a darting run into the Godeston circle beating his two markers and although he appeared to have taken the ball wide of the goal his reverse stick shot was too quick and accurate for Barney to deal with. It was only then that Gorleston seemed to come to life playing with the style and freedom of they are well capable. The catalyst was a well-taken short corner goal which Jamie Higginbotham flashed into the top corner of the visitors net and for the rest of the game the ball rarely left their half. But Norwich Union are not the sort of team to buckle under pressure and a well drilled defensive display saw them hold out for the three points which keep them third in the Division 4 NE League table with a game in hand and a real opportunity for promotion themselves. Gorleston now drop to fifth place.

Division 5NE

10/2/07

Norwich Union IV 2

Norwich City V 2

Union came up against a stronger than expected Norwich City 5 team(they had three of the Norwich City 4 forward line in their team1 being Ady Marr which I have verbally complained about to our league secretary and will put in writing for the league to look into)but made a good start and took the lead when Will Kirby deflected in a short corner strike from Mike Banham at the post.City replied with a goal after a mazy run and finish from Adie Marr to level the scores.Hard work from Union resulted in them retaking the lead after a good move finished off by Will Kirby for his second goal of the game to give Union a 2-1 lead at halftime.Early in the second half City scored an equaliser through Paul Gallop.Then the Union captain was sinbinned for dissent but the remaining 10 players did an excellent job to hold the City forwards at bay during the suspension with Alan Quinton filling in excellently at central defence and keeping the dangerous city forward quiet.When Union returned to full strength chances were very few for either side but as time ran out City were awarded a penalty flick for a bad tackle to stop a scoring opportunity.The Union goalkeeper Chris Millar kept his side level when he saved Paul Gallop's weak flick and the game ended in a draw.

Division 1

10/2/07

Brentwood 6

Norwich Union 3

As the day wore on it became apparent that the snow wasn't going to have a long life in the UK and that there was little chance of a reprieve for the depleted Union side. News the Oli Browne had succumbed to a basketball injury and that his thumb may have gone the way of an England metatarsal necessitated the inclusions of Mr York-Smith, Wolf and as it turned out, a drunken Foxy. Already unavailable were Spender, Simmo, Alex, and Rob for a variety of reasons. Later discovered that Oli Browne found to be injured but intact. - being 11th man brought out a feeling of heroism and he signed up

Union began fairly brightly despite a slightly curtailed warm-up. The first goal was scored by Oli Browne and all looked good. Brentwood looked to counter-attack down the flanks but managed to equalise by a spot of fortune with a loose ball that eluded the defence and fell just right for the forward. Still, Union held the centre of the pitch and they retook the lead. Luke King overlapped down the right and his first-time hit found its mark. And then it went wrong. . . Union had had the better of the game and seemed worth their lead. A short corner drag-flick hit the inside of the post and narrowly missed the opposite post as it pinged across the goal. Had it gone in then that might have caused Brentwood to capitulate. Instead, Brentwood one first one and then a second penalty stroke. Both were correctly awarded and ruthlessly dispatched.

At half time Union were 3-2 down despite their long periods of possession. Almost immediately after the restart another disaster occurred. Luke made an overly generous pass to the opposition who promptly took a two goal lead: Union retreated under the onslaught from a resurgent opposition and conceded a further two goals. A feisty spell saw Tom Bell earn a green card as he battled a similarly testosterone-charged foe and the last bit of spirit from the weary Union saw a shot from Mystic redirected on target by Oli. The final moments saw the centre back and sweeper pushing up like Peter Schmeichel for a late corner but to no avail. The journey home was aided by a few beers after Moulson's failure to find Witham Tesco was retrieved by a high street off licence. PYS bought the port although cheese plans had to be abandoned. Somewhere in the final paragraph, Foxy didn't score.

Division 2N

10/2/07

Norwich Union II 3

Cambridge City II 2

Shock win versus the team Top of the table. . . & the 2nds only had 11 after a 11th hour steal of Robbie Kay by the 3rds, the 3rds & 2nd team Capt didn't know the 1sts had stolen Mr Welfel! Quote from an unnamed 2nd team source "To be fair I don't think it would have happened without him. Matt was absolutely everywhere on the pitch"

Division 2N

3/2/07

Peterborough III 4

Norwich Union II 1

A close game until the final stages when the lack of a Sub told and Peterborough scored two late goals. Young Jones still showed he had got it - a first team recall awaits!

Division 1

3/2/07

Norwich Union 2

Peterborough Town II 0

Languishing once more in the relegation zone, Union were under pressure to regain the initiative and aim for full points. City of Peterborough meanwhile were looking to challenge for an outside chance at promotion. A close match in the first half of the season was won with a last-gasp goal by Peterborough but a strong union squad were up to redress the balance. Union started brightly (for a change), working extremely hard with the comforting sight of strength on the bench. Defence from the front was the order of the day and was continued energetically right through the team. The opening goal was to come via some well worked passing by a number of union players, Oli Browne finding his mark after a week off. Other chances fell to several players and went wide but good defending kept too many clear chances falling to the dangerous Peterborough strikers. Another goal by Oli took Union in at half time with a solid 2-0 lead.

Peterborough's interval talk clearly encouraged a more aggressive style of play as they tried to regain the initiative. Union fought hard to contain the attacks and Jim was called on to make a number of important saves. The depth on the bench was tested to the limit as players squeezed every last drop of their reserves out. Chances fell to both sides but neither looked destined to be successful. A moment of madness from Robbie Kay could have seen him taking an enforced break but the umpire showed a green card and the ball was retrieved from where it had been petulantly kicked to. The ensuing short corner, given prior to the offence was defended bravely and the loose ball cleared by Jim to great relief. With the second half ending in deadlock Union were able to leave the field triumphant. Our first clean sheet was a credit to the Jim and the defence. Dave Rutherford was man of the match. In further divisional news, Witham stayed just out of reach with a narrow win but Bedford slipped up to allow Union to leave the bottom four again. We now have to play all the teams below us before the season's end so it's within our own hands to survive. On this week's performance we are in with a good chance.

Division 5NE

3/2/07

Harleston VII 0

Norwich Union IV 7

The result won't count in the league as after the game it was discovered that the opposition had been kicked out of the league due to conceding too many games and all their results are now void. It was still worth playing though to allow us to put in such a good performance in preparation for upcoming matches. With only 11 players after late withdrawals and after having to wait around for the opposition to find an umpire Union made a fast start to the game taking control and putting the opposition on the back foot and enabling them to play the game in Harleston's half of the pitch. An early goal was scored by Alan Quinton after an accurate pass from halfway the lead was soon increased with goals added by Will Kirby and Tom Banham. A brief dip in the pace that Union had been playing at occurred towards the end of the half so no further goals were scored before half-time so Union went into the break 3-0 ahead. After a half-time talk Union resumed at the high pace they had started the game at with wonderful crisp accurate passing. More goals began to be added with second goals for Kirby and Quinton and a goal for Chris Harrison with a shot from an acute angle. Goalkeeper Robbie Whiting made two excellent saves from separate short corners to prevent Harleston getting a consolation goal and ensure a clean sheet for Union. With the last hit of the game Alan Quinton scored to get his hat-trick reacting quickest to turn the ball in when the Harleston keeper made a save from the last short corner of the game. This was an excellent team performance with a great exhibition of fast passing hockey.

Division 1

27/1/07

Witham 3

Norwich Union 0

Hi All. Here's time for some of my usual musings:

Early on a cool and grey Saturday morning, the Union first XI saddled up in a Moulson-driven minibus to head for darkest Essex. Witham have been Union's bogey team for several years now but have struggled in recent months and tumbled down the table. A win for Union would put 6 points between the two sides and maintain our climb. A new pitch, in Witham itself, offered promise of a better surface than that at Braintree leisure centre although yet to be built facilities caused the team to travel changed. Despite this, a critical decision not to stop at services left several of the team warming up rather gingerly in a "John Wayne" style of movement. The pitch itself proved to be slow and rather bouncy which undoubtedly had something to do with the number of missed stops and failed skills to come. The match started and immediately the men in pink (the ones with whistles) made a crucial impact on the outcome. A strong early challenge by Rich Smith just inside Union's 25 was penalised with a short corner and a still day-dreaming defence failed to clear a dangerous ball wide of Giles' left post. One-nil down before working up a sweat. The half proceeded in a very uniform manner; Witham banged the ball hard down their right flank to a forward who tried repeatedly taking on Rich Smith. Most tackles by Smith and also by Chris Simmonds were penalised despite the hammering everyone else seemed to take in 50-50 challenges. Union failed to gel up front and created few chances and no short corners. To cap a miserable 35 minutes, Witham scored again just before half time after a well worked short corner dragged everyone out of position and Giles was unable to keep it out. Two is never enough - we've seen that many times before and so hope remained.

At least, until the whistle blew and the match restarted. The second half was pretty much as turgid as the first and even when Witham went down to 10 men after a fairly innocuous challenge things didn't really look like changing. A few short corners were won but didn't realise anything. With a few minutes to go some fancy footwork and a 70 yard pass put a striker through one on one with Giles and he found his mark. Had Union been so clinical then things might have been different. So what now? We know we can play better than that so it's time to mark that as a never-to-be-repeated low. A few missing players return to bolster the side and the short corner practice which was put off due to the lack of a training session will surely become a priority. Union have played some very impressive hockey at times this season but it needs to happen every week.

Division 5NE

27/1/07

Harleston VI 2

Norwich Union IV 3

Union struggled in the first half to get to grips with the experienced players in the opposition team and twice went behind but each time lifted their game to equalise. The first a short corner strike from Mike Banham and the second a mazy dribbling run from Martin Lee and clinical finish making good use of an excellent advantage played by the umpire. The team went in level at half-time but knowing they would have to play better in the second half if they wanted to get the three points. The team started with more determination in the second half and soon took the lead with a short corner variation with the ball being returned to the injector Andy Key who fired home. The team continued to have the better of the half with plenty of attacking play but couldn't find another goal which led to a few anxious moments at the end of the game as Harleston tried valiantly to find an equaliser but Union just about ran out deserved winners though not having played as well as they have of late.

Division 1

20/1/07

Norwich Union 4

Cambridge Nomads 4

Time for more waffle from the first team – a match with lots to talk about!

The first post-Christmas league match was against high-flying Cambridgeshire Nomads, who had convincingly beaten Union at home. This was a very different side though and confidence was high. An earnest team talk was followed by a comprehensive warm-up on the pitch and for a change, Union looked ready to play from the off. A tactical error by the captain saw us facing into the low sun, having taken the ball. Union held on to it fairly well and the opening exchanges were quite even. It took a short corner for things to go wrong. A change of angle from the striker opened up a clear shot which thumped into the backboard. A further short corner was awarded after a clearance kick deflected up to give Luke a cut forehead. The argument as to whether Jim had raised the ball progressed until a green card was shown and Nomads added insult to injury by hammering home again. Two is never enough. Thus spake the Wolfe many seasons past and so it proved to be.

The introduction of the short-tressed homunculus Tom Bell saw immediate rewards after some unselfish play set him up on the back post. With almost his next touch he was able to muscle through the defence to equalise. Union momentum was to be lost soon after when Jim lost control at the umpire again and was shown a yellow card. Goalkeeping rules have changed. Did anyone else know that? You don't need to have anyone kitted up and so various options were toyed with and rejected. Thanks to Gary for offering his services but not being on the team-sheet it seemed unwise. Oli Browne offered to stick on a lid and take his chances. Nutter! In the end Luke put on the kit – perhaps still suffering from his bruised pate. The short corner was successfully defended but just before half time another short was bundled over for a well finished hat-trick. 2-3 at half time Jim returned to the fray for the second half and Union revelled in the return to full strength. Goals from Edd Smith and Rob Kay, both from broken down short corners, gave union the lead although mad substitutions (sorry guys, lost track) perhaps caused havoc.

The win was not to come however as a fourth goal, same guy and another short gave Nomads a point they probably deserved. Good results below leave union in 8th and with a chance to climb next week.

Division 2N

20/1/07

Norwich City II 7

Norwich Union II 1

After an unfortunate accident during warm up whereby Andy Kelsall put the ball over the UEA fence and straight through the back windscreen of Ricky's punto, NU got off to a flying start. We took an early lead from a short corner strike from Andy Kelsall and it looked like the 2's were really up for the game. More sustained pressure from NU saw us gain 10 yards on numerous occasions as City, rattled by our early onslaught, began arguing with the Umpires decisions.

Then came a momentary lapse in concentration that allowed City to equal the score at 1-1 against the run of play. But from that point onwards a dark cloud descended over the NU players that saw us forget every basic hockey principle known and allowed city to take control of the game. Persistent pressure from city was rewarded with several short corners which were converted in addition to a number of goals from open play. Although NU regained some of their drive and commitment during the last 10 minutes, probably through pure frustration and disappointment, the game ended in a very disappointing 7-1 to Norwich City.

Division 5NE

20/1/07

Norwich Union IV 2

Ipswich IV 3

In a game against the 100% league leaders Union started slowly and allowed Ipswich to dictate the game in the early stages and were made to pay by their opponents who ran into a 3-0 lead. A set of substitutions helped Union to start to match the opposition and just before halftime a goal was pulled back when Matt Willson reacted quickest when the ball came loose after a save from the Ipswich keeper to slot the ball home. The second half saw Union come out and take control of the game and put Ipswich onto the back foot and a further goal was pulled back with a good shot from Ady Kemp. Though Union continued to dominate they could not find another goal. This was an excellent performance by two good sides playing the game in a good spirit and with good hockey skills. If we can maintain this level of performance we will be winning the majority of the games we have left to play.

Friendly

13/1/07

Norwich Union 2

Norwich City 3

Another grey day, another derby match. When will the season restart? Union started with a promising team. No Oli Browne but the bench was bolstered by the keenness of Spender and the experience of Phil York-Smith. Glen 'Twitcher' Richardson saw his chance to escape and went off to watch birds in some far-flung place. Still, 13 is always a luxury. The enthusiasm of the team was immediately apparent as only three players arrived on time. Yes, that's GMT chaps. Richard Moulson might well have made it but for Robbie. 'I never actually read my email properly' Kay not noticing the slightly early start time and keeping him waiting. Apologetic texts started to arrive...

The team talk was uninspirational. That was officially voted on after the match so it must be true. The warm up was limp. Then the problems started. Only one umpire? Well, he's with City so who is ours? Ah, we don't have an umpire? Frantic phone calls uncovered the unfortunate truth. Thankfully an umpire from the game before agreed to double up and we escaped having two City umpires! (there were both City peeps Rupert). City started very quickly as union struggled to get out of first gear. Playing with three forwards and their defensive line pushed right up to the half way, city were able to apply lots of pressure and it looked like working immediately. Union passes went astray with alarming regularity and a combination of lax marking and rash missed tackles kept Jim on his toes. After a few near-misses a goal was inevitable. Was it the back post tap-in or the short corner first? I'm quite sure I can't remember! Anyway, at 2-0 down, union found their balls and started to put up a fight. A badly executed short corner (one of several) fell for the skipper to shunt the ball optimistically goalwards. The defender on the line was unlikely to be beaten until up popped substitute 'Spender' and rammed it home to bring us back into the game. His attempt to get substituted was greeted from the sideline by the encouraging "when you score another one" and so on he stayed. Another outbreak of foot in mouth disease was starting to spread amongst the union players as they fought for control and a few decisions seemed to lack the hoped-for consistency between umpires. Robbie Kay suffered a full blown attack of the disease and his tourette-style should of "You idiot" right in the umpires face allowed him a well earned sick leave. Half time and out came the Christmas jelly babies. Out too came a whinge from the captain which was lightened towards the end as 'Mystic' Edd accentuated the positive. Quickly seizing on this, Snelling said a few jolly things and sent the boys back on their way.

The second half was a close affair. Union had found some confidence on the ball and passing ability which had otherwise eluded them. Sadly it was City who took the initiative when a well used third party (surely not) set up a reverse shot which was nicely slotted away. Union protestations grew until the captain quelled them with a 'time-out' which was criticised at the time but which settled the side for the rest of the game. Union made some good raids as City tired (union tired too but that's not the point) and Ben Miles was able to weave some magic to score and bring the game close again. A typical last five saw union looking dangerous but the game stayed tantalisingly out of reach and ended Union 2 – City 3. Next week

sees us back into league action against Cambridge Nomads. We lost this one badly last time but that was a long time ago and a surprise might be in store if they don't take us seriously.

Friendly

13/1/07

Norwich City IV 0

Norwich Union IV 5

Union started the game at a fast pace and took control of the game and turned this into an early goal when Tom Banham scored his first goal for the team. The fast passing game Union were playing continued and they deservedly doubled their lead when Tom Banham scored his second goal. As the first half passed the halfway stage City came more into the game but good marking and a solid display by the defence prevented them from scoring. The start of the second half saw Union return to their passing game using the width and stretching the opposition players and scored a quick goal with a short corner strike from Mike Banham which killed the game off. Tom Banham then completed his hat-trick and a final goal was scored by Richard Draeger with a slight deflection from a corner which then deflected off an opponent into the net. A great team performance to set the team up for the resumption of the league program against the 100% league leaders next week.

Friendly

6/1/07

Norwich Union IV 3

Harleston Magpies V 4

In the first match since the Christmas break Union 4 played a friendly against a team from a division above. In the first half Union had a short spell of good play but were made to pay for poor marking and rustiness from the break and at halftime found themselves 4-0 down.

A revitalised second half performance saw a display of excellent passing hockey with the ball being moved round quickly and accurately with good support for the players in possession. The Harleston players were also being well marked and not being allowed time on the ball and as a result they were being put under extreme pressure. Union were rewarded for this good play with three goals a short corner strike from Banham, a close range effort from Quinton when Harleston failed to clear a short corner and the goal of the game a stunning shot hit with pace into the opposite corner from Key. An equaliser could not be found in the remaining time but if Union repeat their second half form for the rest of the season some good results will be achieved.

Division 4NE

16/12/06

Norwich Union III 3

Felixstowe II 1

After a closely fought 1st half the game came to life. The trio of Rutledge, Biscuit & Trigger controlled the centre of the pitch with Jones gradually running off his hangover & proving a handful up front. Rutledge opened the scoring only for a classic "most vulnerable when you have just scored" reply from the Felixstowe. Although how the unmarked man standing at the back post wasn't picked up...!! A turn of pace from Bruce saw him beat his man, play a long ball forward & after some neat inter play between Trigger & Jones the young South African scored to restore Unions lead. Umpire Morley then got him self added to the Felixstowe Xmas card list... Trigger drove forward, played the ball to Jones who promptly MISSED it... however, the ball ended up in the goal, and initially a 16 was given. Kely realised which side his bread was buttered, or more importantly who was paying his fee & buying him a beer..... and the goal was awarded, clearly after careful consideration Trigger was in the D when he passed to Garnett! Despite pulling one back Union held firm for a well deserved win.

Division 1

16/12/06

Norwich Union 3

Spalding 2

11am in Spalding. The day after the drinking session. What's wrong with that picture?

Well, we managed to turn up at Pinebanks with the last arrival about 15 minutes late. Spalding insisted that 11 was the only slot they could get and the league forced the game to go ahead despite a meet time of 8.45. The patisseries provided by Dave Rutherford were much appreciated – bananas being spurned for the sugar rush and we set off. A few minor detours later and we arrived to the duck infested realms of Glead Boys School. The Spalding team were already out on the pitch and warming up and the umpires soon started the game despite Union having only ten minutes to shake off the journey.

Union started with some woeful displays of passing ceding possession repeatedly, although Spalding's long ball strategy soon returned it. A sky-scraping aerial down the left wing was narrowly missed behind the opposition defence as the crapulent team in white started to gain the ascendancy. After an imaginatively saved short corner failed to open the skipper's account the union side finally broke through for Alex Browne to score with a cheeky reverse effort.

Half time saw a tactical swap as Oli Browne's (non alcoholic) illness started to take hold. Oli moved to the forward line with his brother to hide from the game. With Alex rampaging amongst the maroon defenders, union grew over-confident and chances started to appear at both ends. Oli proved quickest to the ball twice to outscore his sibling but union also conceded a couple of soft goals that on another day might have been negated. With three minutes to go, Ben Miles went to the corner with the ball. The rest is history.

Team for next week, Santa, Rudolf, Dancer, Prancer, Donner, Blitzen, Some elves. Oh who cares? UNION ARE OUT OF THE BOTTOM FOUR!!!

Merry Christmas to you all.

Division 1

9/12/06

St. Neots 2

Norwich Union 3

St Neots are flying high above in Division 1, having won 9 of their 11 first half league games. With a bare 11, union went in determined to play some good hockey and make the ball do the work. The absence of Mystic Edd in the middle was countered by the return to the team of Ben Miles after his 'wilderness years' in New Zealand. Gary joined the team in the forward line, brimming with desire to show his old club a thing or two.

Union made a terrific start, playing the ball around effectively and making raids into the opposition area. After a couple of sighters including a backhand shot, Ben put himself firmly back into the union affections by seizing on a loose ball to beat the keeper.

St Neots reorganised and started making some worrying breaks with their pacy forwards who included a member of the Lion King cast. A well worked move overwhelmed the cover and Jim was left stranded as the ball was efficiently dispatched into the goal. Soon afterwards, a speculative

free hit in towards the post found the stick of Alex Brownie who having previously dented the post, tipped it in to regain the lead.

Both teams continued to show they were out for the points and the umpires copped most of the resulting flak. A green card was awarded to a St. Neots for chat although in a strange decision a Greg Louganis impression by the Saints striker resulted in an attacking free hit but no card. I don't think anyone got that one...

The captains were called over at half time to calm down the back-chat and for Union it seemed to work. They soaked up the inevitable pressure and made a series of breaks which finally forced Saints onto the back foot. A raid down the left put Alex through with only the keeper to beat but things went a tad wrong (jug avoidance?) and a move by Gary was forcibly stopped just outside the 25 to produce a rather obvious yellow card.

A lapse in defence allowed Saints to equalise as two defenders were beaten and Dave's stick struggled like an eel to escape his clutch. The goal was well taken at the near post. Union continued to press and a cross 'd' ball to Luke gave him time to pick his spot (and I think he took enough time to pick some flowers too) so hammer home his first Union goal.

Another call to the captains, with the umpire blaming the players for ruining the game for him and there were ninety seconds left. The skipper called for a cynical run into the corner and Ben obliged.

After about 3 minutes of the ninety seconds, with surely no time remaining, the union captain mysteriously put the ball across the area to push for a late extra goal. Surely there was no time left to get down the other end? This moment of madness, which cost heavily in the fines session, gave Saints one last chance although I think limbs would have been lost before they were allowed to take it.

Man of the match was a three way tie although paper-scissors-stone proved Alex to be most worthy. The other two, Ben and Luke get honourable mentions in Dispatches. Frankly, we should all get medals!

Division 5NE

9/12/06

North Walsham II 4

Norwich Union IV 2

This was a classic game of 2 halves. Union made an excellent start to the game with good attacking play with Martin Lee and Simon Parsons in centre midfield linking and supporting the forwards. Union took the lead from a Mike Banham shot from a short corner. The lead was doubled when Mike's son Richard used his pace to beat the defence and slot the ball past the goalkeeper as he came out. Though Walsham had several short corners Union kept them out and went into half-time 2-0 up. Tactical changes made by Walsham at half-time strengthened their midfield and they began to dominate and soon got back on level terms. Union were also struggling to get players up field to help the forwards when they had the ball. Walsham were then awarded a flick and Union were reduced to 10 men when a player was yellow carded for questioning the decision. The Union keeper Millar made a great save from the flick. Union worked hard to prevent any goals going in while a player down but the efforts needed caused the team to run out of steam in the latter stages and Walsham were able to add 2 more goals to run out 4-2 winners.

Division 5NE

2/12/06

Bury IV 2

Norwich Union IV 1

Union had to start this game with 9 players as two players had got lost on the way. The 9 did an excellent job preventing Bury taking advantage of the extra men and even creating chances of their own. When the team reached full strength instead of improving their play Union started forgetting basics and leaving Bury players unmarked. Though Union hit the post through Chris Harrison they were fortunate to go into half-time level at 0-0. Though a half-time team talk tried to correct the problems Union were punished for more carelessness and a slow start to the second half as Bury scored twice. As the half wore on Union started to improve and forced the Bury goalkeeper to make some good saves and the rebounds just wouldn't fall to the Union forwards. A great stop on the line by the post by a defender denied Mike Banham what looked like a certain goal from a short corner strike. Finally Union made their pressure count when a Bury defender turned the ball into his own net when trying to clear. The goal was so late in the game that Union didn't have time to score another. Best player on the day for Union was Mark Harrison.

Division 5NE* 3-0 result awarded to Bury IV

25/11/06

Norwich Union IV 3

Norwich City IV 6

Union started brightly and a good spell of early pressure was rewarded with a close range goal at the far post from Chris Harrison. However City's Ady Marr then began to come into his own and Union couldn't cope with his speed on the ball and dribbling skills and conceded 3 goals to reach the break 1-3 behind.

A tactical change by Union took place at half-time but initially City added another goal. Union showed great character to fight back and scored two goals through Alan Quinton and a strike from a short corner by Mike Banham to bring the score back to 3-4. Pushing for an equaliser Union conceded another two goals to leave the final score 3-6 with Marr scoring 4 goals for City and Sparrow 2. A good performance by Matt Wilson on his return from 2 months out with a broken wrist.

Division 1

18/11/06

Berkhamstead 2

Norwich Union 3

A very early start picking up the minibus to make a 9am meet time left me and a few other players looking decidedly bleary-eyed but we made good time with Simmo at the wheel and arrived in Tring to the music of Top Gun and with a growing feeling of enthusiasm creeping in. A quick change and car-park warm-up ensued with us taking the pitch as soon as it was clear and cracking on with the ballwork. The decidedly slow and bouncy pitch taking a bit of getting used to. Another successful coin toss (4 in a row I think) and I chose to play with the sun at our backs and downwind. Before the match I was briefed by one of our reacquired players (he turned down the offer of a trip) on Berko's way of playing hockey. "Physical, long ball and watch out for the fat, grey haired guy up front - let him talk himself off the pitch as he's capable of it". The game started with Berko piling forward, hitting long and aiming at the fat, grey haired guy up front and they were slow to respond with a rather changed side. A few corners went Berko's way (though several breakaways nearly went ours) and they put one in with a ball tipped in on the Jim's left. At this point the final part of the prophecy came true. Number 10, the corpulent, grizzle tressed striker made a comment of "where was the advantage" which the umpire managed to mangle into "you blind B*st*rd!". A yellow card was awarded, which even the union players argued against. At this point the game changed. Union started to get things together. Rich Phillis stepped up to the pace of div one and we started to chuck around some better passes. After several chances going begging, Ollie Browne finished crisply from a loose ball in the 'D'. Garnett made his cameo appearance on the pitch and showed that he is still a quality player despite the reduction in his once-searing pace. By half-time we were in the ascendancy and the mood was confident.

After even more chances had not quite found the Berko net, a disaster occurred. A cross found a Berko foot, looped up into the air over Jim and was put away in confusion. The umpire missed the foot and the goal stood. The game was slightly shaky for a while but union settled again and Berko tempers began to fray. Another yellow card was produced and suddenly the game shifted back to the good guys. A top-spin short corner strike from Olly Browne at the top position hit the keeper and somehow jumped over him into the net. Union losing now would have been a travesty and with five minutes to go the keeper failed to stop Alex Browne getting passed him without a desperate lunge. The resulting penalty was converted confidently (Shelling) (after a discussion about the position of the spot relative to the goal - the ball was placed about a foot from the mark to be central). Beer, service stations and singing all featured in the next few hours. Job done.

I think the team deserve real credit for the way they played. This was the antithesis of the Cambridge University game - stifling, smothering tackles with play constantly broken down and long hits predominating. It took ten or fifteen minutes for us to adjust but we did so brilliantly and finished as by far the stronger team. Rich Phillis stepped up very well in difficult circumstances and Garnett showed his class. Edd Smith was man of the match but with three people only a vote behind and three getting a mention, it was very tight.

Division 2N

18/10/06

Norwich Union II 3

Ely 2

A good hard performance by Union combined with the opposition hitting the post 4 times gave the home team their first points of the season!

Division 4NE

18/11/06

Norwich Union III 2

Crane 2

Tight game.- We had most of the pressure but failed to find the right final ball. Despite the generous nature of young John a point was earned 3 mins from time.

Division 5NE

18/11/06

Crane II 1

Norwich Union IV 5

Norwich Union 4 travelled to this away game with just 11 players and an outfield player having to take the role of goalkeeper and several players playing out of position. The team made the perfect start to the game with an early goal from a short corner converted at close range by A. Quinton. Instead of pressing on the team dropped it's level and gave the ball away too easily and were made to pay when Cranes levelled the score and this is how it remained at half-time. After a change to a short accurate passing game in the second half Union began to take control and build up the pressure and were rewarded with two goals in quick succession. This included a first goal for Union by Simon Beckett in only his third game in mens hockey. As the game wore on Union scored with a short corner strike from Banham and Kirby scored his second goal in the half to emphasize their superiority. A great performance by the team with special mention to the midfield with good performances by Chris and Mark Harrison and Alan Quinton all playing out of position and a strong second half display by Ollie Ireland.

Division 1

11/11/06

Cambridge University II 1

Norwich Union 1

A strong Union side this week and a good warm-up ensured that we went into this match with confidence. Having won the toss and taken the ball, union then held it for a long period throwing it around the team with real aplomb. Dave Rutherford got to play the villain and finally let Cambridge have a touch. From this point a really high quality match emerged. Cambridge came to play good hockey too and showed discipline and skill in possession, and good work-rate when union had the ball. After a long and well played stalemate for most of the first half a moment of magic led to an opener for union. Rob Wagstaff, fresh on from the bench, received the ball near to the opposition back line and reverse-sticked it across the goal for Tom Bell to finish firmly into the corner. This lead was maintained all the way to half time and beyond. The second half continued as before with tight marking and hard work off the ball from both teams. Man-of-the-match Richard Smith showed exceptionally good skill and timing to nullify a pacy right winger and several chances were made in the Cambridge half. Sadly a missed tackle in the 'D' fell kindly for a Cambridge forward and he put it away coolly, leaving Jim no chance. The rest of the game was nip and tuck but no further goals were scored. Union Move up one place and Cambridge fall one as a result.

Division 4NE

11/11/06

UEA II 2

Norwich Union III 1

After creating a number of openings Union opened the scoring after good work from Mal set up Garnett for a good finish. After holding on of a UEA fightback a dubious short corner right on half time led to the equaliser. The 2nd half was mostly one way traffic with UEA finally forcing an winner through an 'OG'!

Division 5NE

11/11/06

Norwich Union IV 2

Pelicans III 2

A game between two sides playing quality hockey with Union showing great character to come from a goal-down twice to gain a well deserved draw. Pelicans took the lead in an even first half when a forward deflected in a free hit from outside the D. A tactical change at half-time saw Richard Banham come on and man-to-man mark the Pelicans playmaker which swung the game in Unions favour. Concerted pressure was rewarded with an equaliser by A. Quinton. The game swung from end to end and with 10 minutes to go Pelicans regained the lead when a penalty flick was converted. Refusing to be beaten Union pressed on and got a deserved equaliser from A. Quinton and had chances to win the game as both sides pressed hard in the final moments. An excellent game with a great team performance with each player giving their all and some great passing hockey played by the team.

Division 1

4/11/06

Norwich Union 2

Saffron Walden 1

A second win today for the first XI 2-1 against Saffron Walden. In many ways a similar game to the week before, lots of possession and chances including a number of 2 on 1 which didn't come off. This was an untidy match for both sides and the ball was turned over repeatedly through unforced errors. The second half started with a bright move into the opposition 'D' and the keeper's high clearance earned us a short corner. The sneaky drag-flick down the middle opened the account for Snelling and Union. As Walden became increasingly desperate to equalise they overstretched themselves and a fine move through a number of players created a free top of the area shot which was dispatched by a happy captain. From that point the game became very messy with some needle developing between the teams. A Robbie Kay tackle earned a generous green card and a back stick tackle by Dave Rutherford was made only just outside the area (also earning a green). Walden scored a short corner, finally beating heroic man-of-the-match Jim – whose knee had been causing him real pain since the first half. Union had more chances as pressure was applied to them but the remainder of the game was goal-less.

Division 5NE

4/11/06

Sudbury III 6

Norwich Union IV 1

A 10 man fourth team worked very hard but the numerical advantage which was exacerbated when a player became injured leaving the team with only 9 fit players was too much to overcome. Sudbury scored early and scored four goals before halftime but just before the break Union pulled back a goal with a superb reverse stick pass from halfway by Thompson which picked out Key in the D who finished with a cool shot. The team did well to only allow Sudbury to score two goals in the second half. A good team performance with special mention of the play of the youngsters Tom Banham and Simon Beckett and an excellent display in midfield by Richard Thompson.

Division 1

28/10/06

Old de Ferrians 3

Norwich Union 2

Pre-match shenanigans led to us accepting a non-pool umpire at one end (the missing man was in New York?). This gave us trouble at one end all game.

Once we started we went quickly a goal down before the game had settled into any rhythm. A foul on Robbie in the area should have been penalised and instead the ball found its way over the line. A second goal came against the improving run of play although we weren't rattled for too long this time. One of a procession of poor short corners was tipped in by Edd to take us to 2-1 at half time.

We started the second half brightly with some good raids down the middle by Luke and solid defending. Several more short corners went unconverted before we were 3-1 down to a sucker-punch goal. A second Edd Smith goal gave us hope, especially as ODF were reduced to 10 after one too many stick tackles but the overload was poorly used with lots of over-ambitious long balls played (captain also sadly culpable). Despite perhaps being the better side we were unable to find the net again and slipped to 11th of 12. A sick Edd Smith was man of the match with good contributions from Jason Wolfe and very unselfish cover from Neil Shorten when we really needed him. Two home games on the trot now.

Division 2N

28/10/06

Norwich Union II 1

Harleston Magpies II 8

Heavy defeat against a strong Magpies side. The next four games are against the other 4 in the bottom 5... a good opportunity for a run of results.

Division 4NE

28/10/06

Sudbury II 3

Norwich Union III 4

Even first half ended with us 2 nil down. Early 2nd half goal from Garnett reinforced the self belief. Further good work from Garnett led to a poached 2nd from Cross. By this stage Sudbury were well & truly on the racks... until a quick snooze allowed them to regain the lead. With 10 mins to go... McQuade out of defence to Trigger, aerial to Tom - bang... equaliser. From that stage there was only going to be one winner... & with 2 mins to go finally we converted a short corner. Trigger through the defender on the post.

Division 5NE

28/10/06

Norwich Union IV 3

Norfolk Nomads 0

Union gained their fourth successive league win to maintain the pressure on the leaders. Union took an early lead with a low drilled shot by Banham from a short corner. Despite continuing pressure they could not add to their lead in the first half. At the start of the second half Union withheld a spell of Nomads pressure before stretching their lead with a reverse stick finish at the far post from Kirby from a crossfield pass. A further goal was added from a Banham penalty stroke to make the final score 3-0. A good display from the defence was rewarded with the first clean sheet of the season.

Division 1

21/10/06

Norwich Union 2

Brentwood 1

A very bright start for Union, lots of possession with the ball played across the back with aplomb. Basically the start we've been waiting for. First half went generally well with several chances and a shot touched in by Tom Bell after a decent build-up. Brentwood came out rather more aggressively in the second half and started to cause a few problems. We started to get stuck back in our half and Brentwood had a few opportunities. Despite this, union put together some good attacks and a missed ball arrived on the end of a certain Mr Snelling's stick and was routinely put away. 10 minutes of panic included a Brentwood short corner goal and we were up against it for a while. Despite several niggly moments we were able to get back on top of things and see the game out with a few more chances coming our way. Man of the match was Robbie Kay, who sprayed the ball around the back and underpinned our team's performance.

Division 2N

21/10/06

Cambridge City II 9

Norwich Union II 0

A hard working display from the players that travelled, ultimately the opposition, who are unbeaten, were just too strong.

Division 4NE

21/10/06

Norwich Union III 2

Gorleston 0

A hardworking Gorleston side had all the early pressure. Gradually the extra quality in the 3rds took over, Wolfe scoring after following up on a mis hit shot. Cross then added a 2nd after another good through ball from Spender. No real alarms in the 2nd half & a comfortable win was achieved.

Division 5NE

14/10/06

Norwich City V 2

Norwich Union IV 3

A slow start by Union with difficulty picking up the opposition players, as the half went on things came together and a goal by VanEerten saw the team go into halftime with the lead. A good start to the second half saw the lead increased by a short corner variation with VanEerten drilling a shot into the corner of the goal. City pulled a goal back but a deflection from the fit again Kirby from a Banham shot from a short corner opened up the two goal lead. City pulled a goal back from a short corner but didn't look like scoring again. A third successive win which should really have been by a greater margin but a good performance should keep the 4th team in 3rd place in their division.

Division 1

14/10/06

City of Peterborough II 2

Norwich Union 1

First of all the result, losing 2-1 away to City of Peterborough 2nds leaves NU perilously at the bottom of the division. Despite this Union played a much more competitive game yesterday, scoring first and creating a bit of havoc. In part this was down to a change back to a 4-4-2 system with which players were more comfortable. Despite this NU still created few scoring chances and only one short corner so this needs to be improved. Man of the match Luke showed more of what he is capable of and looks to have cemented his place in the side.

Division 4NE

14/10/06

Bury III 2

Norwich Union III 3

Solid win with several regulars missing. After a snooze on the way to Bury, Brooks and Stephens woke up in time to score the 1st & last goals with Jones scoring in between.

Division 5NE

14/10/06

Norwich Union IV 2

Harleston Magpies VII 1

Union dominated the first half with waves of pressure and pinned Harleston into their own half not letting them out by good pressing of the opposition 16 hits. The goal this pressure deserved wasn't forthcoming and at halftime it was goal-less. At the break the talk was to carry on and the pressure would turn into goals. Unfortunately the reverse happened and for 5 mins the team went to sleep and were punished when Harleston opened the scoring from a short corner. The team responded well to this setback and managed to get back on top and equalised through Martin Lee. The game was then interrupted by a pitch invasion by a dog that had got off it's lead. The teams good play was rewarded by an excellent winner which started from a 16 by Mike Banham and with 3 other passes involving Alan Quinton and Partrick VanEerten cut the opposition apart and resulted in Quniton scoring.

Division 5NE

7/10/06

Norwich Union IV 2

Harleston Magpies VI 1

A below par performance in the first half saw the 4th team struggling to contain the Magpies midfield and a goal was conceded to go into halftime 0-1 down. A strengthened central midfield and improved work rate saw Union get on top and start to apply pressure and a good move involving Richard Banham and Alan Quinton saw Ben Dures score an equaliser. Harleston were struggling to make chances and the winning goal came when a bouncing shot from Van Eerten beat the keeper. Union saw the game out with just one anxious moment.

Division 4NE

7/10/06

UEA III 0

Norwich Union III 8

UEA 3rds were hopeless, just a case of playing as a team & seeing how many we could score! And score we did with Wolfe bagging 3, Hant 2, Price another 2 (yes Price!) and Rutledge getting a single.

Division 1

7/10/06

Norwich Union 0

Witham 3

So what happened? We started out with a strong-looking team with bench cover to boot and all looked bright. Once again our defence looked excellent, turning over the ball repeatedly. Where things went wrong was with getting over the half-way line and putting Witham under pressure.

After 10 minutes of being a bit under pressure we started to gain a period of ascendancy and after about 20 minutes we created an open goal chance which was unfortunately missed. A couple of further chances went begging but we went into half-time once again at 0-0. This lasted for about 10 minutes before a ball got through and the forward put it in through the rushing Jim's legs. Two more goals rattled in over the space of about 7 minutes and the game was pretty much over. Despite settling the ship it rarely looked as though Union would actually score. End result 0-3.

Division 1

30/9/06

Cambridge Nomads 4

Norwich Union 2

A good warm-up and positive attitude meant we started with a good level of confidence. A few formational issues had been talked through and we seemed more more clued up than before. As the game got underway it was clear that we were going to be much more competitive than last week.

So what happened? There were just too many silly mistakes made. Too many runs straight into defender's sticks and a whole host of passes going astray. Cambridge did far better at taking their chances although Tom showed good persistence to take us into half time at 1-1. Things deteriorated in the second half with a number of instances of indiscipline compounding our problems. Cambridge took the score to 4-1 and heads dropped. A well hit short corner from Oilly Browne brought us back into things a bit with ten to go, but the rest of the game played out instalemate. Union are now bottom of the table although only two teams have more than 3 points. There are still lots of positives in the way we defended but we have to hold the ball better.

Division 2N

30/9/06

Norwich Union II 2

Norwich City II 3

In what proved to be tight match and after reducing the arrears twice Union had to finally settle with nothing from the game.

Division 4NE

23/9/06

Norwich Union III 6

Holt 0

A good all round team performance which saw the hapless Holt defender on the line think he had Trig's short corner strike covered 3 times - only to find it go right past him! First game back for Mr Rutledge and it was like he had never been away. Good running from Sinclair and Draeger to cover Rutledges tiring efforts. Solid performance from Ives covering at centre back with no passes to the opposition's centre forward to report!

Division 5NE

30/9/06

Ipswich IV 2

Norwich Union IV 0

The scoreline doesn't reflect the wonderful team performance put in with Union giving everything they had and for 60 minutes preventing the opposition from scoring. It wasn't just a defensive performance as several good chances were created with good passing and support of the player with the ball. Union could have taken the lead with a short corner stopped on the line and a couple of good opportunities in the second half when the score was 0-0. Despite going behind and Ipswich doubling their lead quickly Union refused to buckle and maintained the level of performance to the final whistle which was a great achievement as the team only had a bare 11. Union's captain was very proud of every member of the team and they all deserve praise for their efforts. If Union maintain this level of performance many positive results will be achieved.

Division 2N

23/9/06

Sudbury 4

Norwich Union II 2

The 2nd team go off to a flying start in the new season taking a 1-0 lead fairly early on in the game at sudbury with a goal from Richard Mills. Early pressure from NU saw the sudbury goal keeper pull numerous saves to keep the score 1-0 until a momentary lapse let sudbury back into the game equalising just before half time. The second half was much the same with NU applying most of the pressure and playing some good hockey. It came as a bit of a surprise then when sudbury took a 2-1 lead.....two goals from 2 shots(not bad odds). NU had several chances the most memorable a missed open goal opportunity after a strong drive into the circle from Rich Phillis put a ball across the front of the goal only for both on coming strikers to miss. Dave skinner equalised with a flick to go 2-2. A little bit a tiredness allowed Sudbury in for their 3rd and when Rich Mills was yellow carded for back chat sudbury finished off the 10 man NU to finish the game 4-2.

Division 1

30/9/06

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Division 4NE

23/9/06

Watton 1

Norwich Union III 4

A cool finish from Mcquade opened the scoring. Watton equalised soon after following the parting of the red sea :-) After a tight first half the extra experience overcome the fitness of the opposition. Young Jones was looking lively on the wing...timing his return to full fitness to reclaim his spot in the first team alongside Edd. Excellent league debut from Rich Draeger who didn't stop running all game.

Division 5NE

23/9/06

Norwich Union IV 1

North Walsham II 1

A disappointing first half with poor marking and discipline by Union allowed North Walsham 2 to take a 1-0 lead. A reorganisation at halftime with Simon Parsons stabilising midfield and good marking and pressure allowed Union to get on top and score a deserved equaliser when Alan Quinton reacted quickest to a loose ball after the keeper had made a save to turn the ball in. Though more chances were created a winner couldn't be found and the Walsham keeper also made a good save from Tom Banham.

Friendly

16/9/06

Norwich City 1

Norwich Union 3

A fine win against a depleted City side. 3-1 and many more chances. Scorers were Bell, Snelling and Croft all from open play. A yellow card for Rob Kay who was unable to let a poor umpiring decision rest made the latter stages of the second half pretty hard in the heat but anything short of a clear win would have been a travesty. There were good contributions all round the pitch and the subs were heavily used. Bring on the league!

Friendly

16/9/06

Norwich Union IV 0

Norwich City IV 2

Union lost 2-0 to a City team from the same division. The goals conceded were down to poor marking but there were some encouraging signs as Union had a lot of pressure and won at least ten short corners; at least two of which were only stopped by a defender's stick on the line. The second half saw Union the more dominant team though their goalkeeper did have to save a flick.

Friendly

9/9/06

Harleston Magpies V 2

Norwich Union IV 0

Union lost 2-0 to a team from a division above but there were some encouraging signs with a good second-half performance.

Women's

Division 1N

28/10/06

St. Ives 2

Norwich Union 3

Union went to St Ives knowing this was going to be a very tough game. However they rose to the challenge. A short corner in the first half saw Union take the lead through man of the match Gemma Nicholls.

St Ives then equalised through a penalty flick.

The second half saw St Ives then take the lead, from a quick break. Union drew level from a well worked free hit, Marie James in the right place to put the ball in the back of the net. The winner came, 5 mins later when Nicholls got her second. Union then had 20 mins of play to hold out, as this game was end to end, but were rewarded with the win. This puts Union in second place in the league on goal difference.

Division 1N

21/10/06

Norwich Union 6

Cambridge University II 1

Union started this game off with a point to prove, and were rewarded with a quick goal after 5 mins, Claire Baker getting the goal. Union second came from a set piece, with Charlie Hemmant scoring.

The team were 3 up by half time, when Gemma Nicholls got on the end of a free hit.

Union continued the pressure in the second half and Nicholls got her second. Cambs. did then rally and were rewarded with a goal from a short. With 10 mins to go, Union changed their formation and this proved to be a good call as the extra pressure rewarded Union with 2 more goals, both scored by Fran Sutton.

Division 1N

14/10/06

Peterborough 3

Norwich Union 1

Union were very slow to start and were punished when Peterborough scored their first goal from a break down of a short. This kick started their game and Union for the rest of the half, were unlucky not to equalise.

At the start of the second half Union carried on where they had left off and were rewarded with a penalty flick, however they were not able to convert.

The pressure was finally rewarded when Fran Sutton, in her first game for the 1's scored. Union however not keep hold of the lead and Peterborough scored 2 more late goals from set pieces.

Division 1N

7/10/06

Norwich Union 0

Watton 1

A very hard fought game with Union unlucky to not get a point out of this. Baker coming closest by hitting the post.

Division 1N

30/9/06

Norwich City 1

Norwich Union 6

City started the game on the attack, but NU's defence held firm. The game then became very even, but after 20 mins, NU got a quick break, from defence and good link up work from Sally Small and Claire Baker lead to Sally Small slotting the ball home. This first goal then lead to 2 very quick others, both from short corners, Gemma Nicholls scoring both.

The second half Union again let Norwich City attack and they were rewarded with their goal. This however spurred NU in to more attacking play, great work from Marie James, set Gemma Nicholls up with her hat trick. Marie was then rewarded with a goal of her own to make it 5. NU got their 6th, when Sally Small gave a pin point pass to Claire Baker, whom took the ball around the keeper and after a scramble on the line was able to jab the ball home.

This result puts NU at the top of the division on goal difference.

Division 1N

23/9/06

Norwich Union 2

Harleston Magpies II 1

NU started very brightly against Harleston 2's in their first leaguematch and took the game to the opposition. Their play was rewarded with a great taken goal from Ali Gunton after getting on the end of a great free hit from Sally Small. The team worked very hard but were unable to maintain the lead when Harleston struck with a great short corner strike. Union came out in the 2nd half having slightly changed their formation, which gave man of the match player Marie James much more space to work in mid field. Union continued to pressure Harleston and were unlucky to have a goal disallowed from a short corner. Harleston did have a couple of good attacks, but the defence held well, with Sam Jellif making some excellent saves in goal. The winner came 3 minutes from the end when Gemma Nics, intercepted a back pass and coolly slotted the ball home to give Union the 3 points.