

2007-2008

Men's Club

Women's Club

(Last update 21 April 2008)

Men's

Division 5NE

19/4/08

Norwich Union IV 3

Sudbury III 4

Prior to their last match of the season Alan Quinton was presented with the Norwich Union 4 Player of the season award. Union played the first half against a 10 man opposition as two of their opponents had been delayed. Union started well creating good chances but were denied by an inspired performance by the Sudbury keeper. Despite having a player less Sudbury were finding a lot of space and time in the middle of the pitch which was giving the Union defenders problems. Just before half-time Union took the lead with a goal from Adrian Kemp. The second half saw Sudbury up to full strength and they scored 2 goals to take a 2-1 lead but Union replied with a short corner strike from Mike Banham to get back on level terms. Sudbury opened a two goal lead with deflected strikes from short corners but Union replied immediately with an excellent goal by Chris Harrison. The Sudbury keeper continued to pull off great saves to ensure his team ran out winners.

Division 5NE

12/4/08

Norfolk Nomads 3

Norwich Union IV 3

Norwich Union made a poor start to this match failing to do the basics and conceding possession to Nomads with poor passing and combined with a lack of marking this led to Nomads taking the lead with a goal from Ben Mann. Union then produced an excellent move down the right which ended with a cross to Patrick Vaneerten who skillfully took the ball round the keeper and slotted in at the far post. Union were not on level terms for long as they were still giving their opponents too much space and time and a Ben Mann shot took a deflection which wrongfooted the Union keeper to give Nomads a 2-1 half-time lead.

At half-time Union talked about the importance of passing more accurately which they put into practise early in the second half with some good attacking plays one of which resulted in an equaliser by Paul Kiwanuka. The match was becoming more open with play moving swiftly from end to end. Nomads retook the lead when Union failed to clear a short corner and Andrew Dellbridge finished from close range. Union were determined not to be beaten and showed great commitment and a short corner strike from Mike Banham brought them level at 3-3. Though there were 10 minutes left neither side could find a winner and the draw was a fair result in a match played in an excellent spirit. A good solid display by Glenn Tobias at left back was one of the individual Union highlights of the match.

The club is determined to carry on running the 4 mens and 4 ladies teams it currently puts out each week and to enable this to occur the two clubs are to merge together. A great deal of support is also being received in the club's cause from Thorpe St Andrew Town Council who are putting a bid together to manage the sports facilities at Pinebanks which we are very appreciative of and also the support we are receiving from Broadland District Council.

Division 5NE

5/4/08

Norwich Union IV 3

Dereham IV 5

Union facing the division runners up who had already ensured promotion struggled in the early stages of the match to cope with the pace and skill of the younger Dereham players. Dereham made the most of this period of play to go 2-0 ahead.

Union then came to life and started moving the ball quickly and using their width to pull Dereham defenders out of position to create spaces in the D and this resulted in a goal being pulled back through Patrick Vaneerten. Dereham quickly regained their two goal lead and went into half-time 3-1 ahead.

At the break Union were encouraged by the play that had led to their goal and confident that if this could be replicated they could get back into the match.

The second half saw Union dominating and taking the game to Dereham with great link play between the forwards and midfield with good performances by Kemp, Key and Harrison and Alan Quinton continuing his rich goalscoring run with 2 goals to bring the scores level. The Dereham keeper made a few important saves and attacking wise Dereham were being kept to sporadic breaks but Morley in the Union goal pulled off a great save high to his right. Against the run of play Dereham took the lead from a short corner which was switched back to the inserter to score. Union tried to equalise but on the final whistle Dereham were awarded a short corner which they converted to give them a slightly flattering two goal advantage.

Division 5NE

29/3/08

Norwich City IV 2

Norwich Union IV 2

Two local teams battled out a 2-2 draw in an evenly contested and high tempo game. Union started well with good passing and keeping good possession, this quickly produced to an early chance but with no-one was able to meet a pass across the D from Andrew Cross. 10 minutes on and Union still kept the pressure on, resulting in the ball being picked out in the D by Will Kirby who turned and pushed hard towards goal with Andrew Cross knocking it across the line to make sure. With the early lead Unions dominance dropped and City got in their stride. It was their turn for pressure and soon equalised. A second goal for City then came quickly after when Union failed to clear a short corner. A few minutes before half time and Union then won a short corner themselves with Patrick Vaneerten coolly finishing by stopping and striking from the top of the D.

2-2 at half time at that's how it stayed; the second half was 50-50 with end to end hockey and both teams' defence and goalkeepers doing superbly to prevent chances going in. Union had the chance to steal the game when a saved effort from City's keeper was followed up by a Chris Harrison shot but only to be accidentally deflected wide. A fair result in the end and well done to the team, 100% work rate and commitment really showed.

Division 5NE

15/3/08

Norwich Union IV 1

Bury St.Edmunds III 4

For the first twenty minutes of this match Union found themselves struggling to cope with the pressure that Bury were exerting but valiant defending and some saves by Morley ensured Bury couldn't turn this ascendancy into goals. Union against the run of play cut through the centre of Bury's defence with some sharp 1-2's which enabled Kirby to score from close range. Bury came back with an equaliser capitalising on a Union mistake so the sides were level at half-time. The second half saw the match flowing from end to end with Bury having a few open field chances but not troubling the Union keeper. Union were awarded several short corners and Bury were indebted to their keeper for keeping them level when despite having to change direction he pulled off a great save from a Banham shot. A draw though was a fair reward for both teams in an even match.

Division 4NE

8/3/08

Pelicans III 0

Norwich Union III 7

A minibus trip to Great Yarmouth saw us arrive in Kings Lyn with me quite confused. We turned up with a bare 11 and that quite frankly felt like two people too many after the start of the game. We Played exceptionally well and by contrast they played exceptionally badly. We passed the ball like a team and even let the ball go backwards and around the back on occasion. The Outcome was inevitable with a 4-0 score line at half time and a 7-0 at the finish. The best thing about the game was getting a pair of jugs, both in the bar (courtesy of Will and Andy) and in the bus (courtesy of Fiesta and Knave). P.S. Adam, they are in your bag!

Division 5NE

8/3/08

Crane II 1

Norwich Union IV 4

Union made a strong start to this match and raced into an early 2 goal lead with a goal from a short corner and another from open play by Alan Quinton. Late in the first half Union were reduced to 10 men when a ball deflected off a Union stick and flew up and hit a team-mate on the forehead who had to leave the pitch with a large swelling. This unsettled the Union team and a spell of poor marking resulted in Cranes pulling a goal back before half-time. The second half found Union facing waves of Cranes pressure which they just managed to contend with but were struggling to get the ball away. A Cranes player then suffered a nasty nose injury which halted the match while treatment was administered. This interruption to the match allowed Union to regroup and compose themselves. When the match was resumed Union started to be able to find their forward Bryan Quinton when the ball was played out of defence and attacks started to be built. Two more goals were scored by Alan Quinton to bring his tally for the game to 4 after scoring a hat-trick in the previous weeks match. The Union team worked hard to win this match not allowing Cranes to capitalise on the player advantage they had for a large proportion of the match and still scoring 2 goals while one player light.

Division 5NE

1/3/08

Norwich Union IV 4

Harleston Magpies VI 5

Union made a slow start to the match which Harleston took advantage of capitalising on poor marking which would be a feature of Union's game to take the lead. Union equalised with Paul Kiwanuka scoring from close range at a short corner. Harleston quickly retook the lead but a decisive deflection from another short corner by Alan Quinton took the two teams into half-time level at 2-2. Union played poorly for a large part of the second half giving their opponents too much space and giving the ball away too easily. Harleston capitalised on this to score 3 goals to run away into a 5-2 lead. Refusing to let their heads drop Union finally started to play the hockey they were capable of with fast stick to stick passing opening up the Harleston defence and two goals from Alan Quinton gave them hope of getting something out of the match. The recovery however had been started too late and the final whistle arrived before Union could get an equaliser.

Division 5NE

23/2/08

North Walsham II 1

Norwich Union IV 1

Union travelled to play the third placed team with a bare eleven with a new player Deepak Malik playing for the first time in 12 years. A great display in the first half by the defence and some good saves by Union goalkeeper Morley from North Walsham short corners prevented Walsham turning their pressure into goals. In the Union midfield Patrick Vaneerten was using all his skill to create space and time and get the Union forwards on the offensive. Half-time came with the score goalless. In the second half Walsham continued to press forward and have short corners but failed to score even missing an open goal. Union made Walsham pay for their wastefulness in front of goal when a Banham pass was collected by Paul Kiwanuka who turned the last defender and ran on and rounded the keeper before tapping in from close range. Walsham continued to press and the Union defence held firm even when reduced to 10 men when the Union captain was sin binned for a poor tackle. Walsham finally equalised from a short corner so late in the match there was not even time to restart before the final whistle was blown. Union were disappointed not to have held out but Walsham deserved something from the match for all their pressure and short corners. Union though can be very proud of their team performance which if repeated will bring many positive results before the season ends.

Division 5NE

16/2/08

Norwich Union IV 0

Thetford Town 3

Union faced the league leaders who had only lost 1 match all season. Realising the toughness of the match Union hoped to prevent Thetford from scoring for as long as possible. Unfortunately the plan failed and Thetford took an early lead. The Union defence and midfield worked hard for the rest of the half marking their opponents tightly and saves by Millar in goal prevented Thetford adding to their lead. Union had one opportunity in the first half when a Mike Banham strike from a short corner was saved. A battling display by Union restricted Thetford to two more goals in the second half and Union had a chance late on with a break to score a consolation goal but the Thetford saved to maintain the clean sheet. This was an encouraging performance by Union against strong opposition in a match played in an excellent spirit by both teams.

Division 5NE

9/2/08

Bury St. Edmunds IV 1

Norwich Union IV 4

Union travelled with 10 players to play the team just below them in the league. Thanks to great commitment and effort from every player to the team cause an excellent victory was achieved.

Union made a good start and were playing the ball round with good passing and movement. Union took the lead when a Mike Banham strike from a short corner took a deflection off a defender's foot and looped up and over the stationary goalkeeper on the line and into the goal. The lead was doubled with an individual goal by Richard Banham using his pace and skill to bamboozle the Bury defence.

The Union defence with Bryan Quinton playing his first match for 3 seasons using all his experience and know how to allow his opponent no opportunities and complemented by great marking by Glenn Tobias and David Pentin prevented Bury from having a shot on target in the first half. Bury came out in the 2nd half determined to get back into the match but an excellent save early in the half from Kelvin Morley in the Union goal held them initially at bay. The match started to get fractious as both sides gave their all and the umpires tried to calm down heated exchanges. Bury finally pulled a goal back but solid play in midfield by Andy Key, Alan Quinton and Ray Hansell prevented Bury making any further impression. Union stretched their lead back to 2 goals when Mike Banham made a long accurate pass out of defence to his son Richard which left the Bury defence trailing and Richard showed great composure to take the ball on and slot it past the keeper. A fourth goal was added when from a long corner Chris Harrison received the ball at the near post and turned and flicked the ball home.

Division 5NE

19/1/08

Harleston Magpies V 1

Norwich Union IV 3

Union started the second half of the league season with a good win against a higher placed side in their division.

A positive start to the match was made by Union who took an early lead when Azeem pressurised a Harleston defender into making a poor pass. This was intercepted at the top of the D by Chris Harrison who showed good composure to score his first goal of the season. Union continued to be the dominant force in the match and doubled their lead when Mike Banham scored with a low driven shot into the corner from a short. Harleston before half-time pulled a goal back. The half-time team talk called for more of the same. In the second half Union showed a great display of man-marking and a solid defensive unit prevented Harleston from having any opportunities to trouble the Union keeper. In the closing stages of the half Union made the three points safe when a switch move at a short corner gave Andrew Hipper the time to place his shot to score.

Division 4NE

19/1/08

Gorleston 3

Norwich Union III 1

An early blitz from Gorleston saw them take a 3-0 lead within the first 15 minutes. We were without 3 of the normal defence, plus we had beaten them in the last 3 games so they were up for revenge! Game settled down & despite Gorleston pressing they couldn't add to their lead. 2nd half was more even, Union had 2/3 good chances to score before Dan Newman & Will combined will for Will to keep his scoring run going.

Division 3NE

19/1/08

Norwich Union II 3

Harleston Magpies IV 5

After a disastrous first 25 minutes which saw Norwich Union 3-0 down the players dug deep to draw magpies back in to a fight with two successful short corners strikes from Andy Kelsall and Rob Wagstaff. Going into the break on the ascendance union came out in the second half firing on all cylinders and after a great solo effort from Jason Wolfe brought the game back to level pegging union looked like at least rescuing a point. However, the mammoth effort to bring the game level had taken a lot out of union and shortly after the equaliser the union defence was caught napping allowing magpies to get their 4th and then a few minutes before the end magpies finished off the game with a 5th goal to end the game 5-3.

Division 1

12/1/08

Witham 1

Norwich Union 1

In light of the recent outbreak of turkey-related bloat, it was with some trepidation that Union set out for the Essex badlands. Witham's new pitch had been devoid of facilities on the last visit forcing some (Spender especially) to play in a state of abdominal discomfort. Union have been struggling recently and have slipped perilously into a relegation spot, with the gaping abyss of four-down preying on their minds. Actually, we've been a bit rubbish and with difficulties putting out a full-strength team exacerbating matters the break in play may have come at a good time. After lots of discussion with players the skipper had sent out a rallying cry and mustered 12 at training, 14 for the away match. Spirits in the minibus were high and we set off optimistically. The journey was mostly uneventful and arrival was in good time. Witham had managed to get busy with the building work to the extent that where no changing facilities had existed there were now 12 rooms, each with en-suite amenities. Of course 14 didn't fit too well but there are sacrifices to such an embarrassment of riches. The captain set out his ideas for the improvement of results and proceeded to make a number of positional changes, most notably bringing Richard Moulson's legendary axing into the centre and pushing Gareth into the forward line. After some mighty striking on the Wednesday, Tom Bell was moved to right midfield to hopefully recreate the angle which had suited him so well. Overall the plan was to push further up the field from the back and gain some previously-lacking positional advantage. Witham appeared to have read the script – they not only dealt with our play confidently but they pushed forward in just the manner we were hoping to emulate. Solid defending help keep them out but still John was forced to make a number of fine saves and trust in the metalwork. The skipper had fortunately run and hidden at left midfield to allow the 'real' defenders to do their bit. The first 15 minutes was mainly one-way with only a few breaks down the wings which failed to trouble the opposition. It took a long time but eventually Union started to recover from their malaise. The brussel sprouts were burnt away in the intensity of the encounter and the woeful passing stepped up towards almost mediocre. The availability of three keen subs enabled us to keep battling when under pressure and a few more breaks started to go the other way. It was 0-0 at half-time and Union knew that they had survived a tough half. Team talk and jelly-babies. A call to arms for the white-clad faithful. Union returned to the fray reinvigorated and started to look more dangerous. At the same time Witham continued with more of the same – quicker to the ball and more adept with the passing they crashed in waves upon the Union defence but failed to break through. This couldn't last forever and eventually they managed to beat both the defence and even John in goal. The pre-Christmas side might have crumbled, but the new version did not. Despite a Witham foul and a Union foot the ball was lashed into the 'd' by Snelling, now playing centre midfield. Alex Browne found the keeper diving at his feet and calmly walked the ball around him before rolling it into the empty goal. Union were euphoric and pushed forward hungrily. Witham continued to fight but they had missed their chance to kill the game off earlier. The rest of the match was a stalemate. Union's away point took them to 11 in the league after 11 matches. More points than this will be needed to survive the second half. That said, having failed to take any points of Witham in a number of recent encounters this was definitely a point won. Further improvements in passing particularly are needed but the more optimistic feel of the side will help carry some difficult encounters.

Man of the match award went to John Livings. The umpires agreed!

Norwich City V 5

Norwich Union IV 2

With an unfamiliar side Union went 2-0 down despite starting the match well. A goal was pulled back with the last hit of the first half when Banham's shot from a short arrowed inside the post.

Union started the second half well with good play by Glen Richardson in centre midfield and Simon Garner playing well up front as he played his first match for a season and a half. An equaliser was scored by Azeem who had not played for Union for more than a season. Union continued to create chances and the play of the forwards and midfield were encouraging.

City scored three goals quickly late in the match which gave them the win by a more flattering scoreline than they deserved.

Division 5NE

8/12/07

Dereham IV 8

Norwich Union IV 1

Union were only able to field 10 players for this match due to withdrawals and players being called up to make up higher teams. In poor conditions Union worked hard to make sure their opponents didn't take advantage of their extra man. Dereham took the lead but Union immediately bounced back and equalised from a Banham strike at a short corner. Thanks to some excellent saves by Morley in the Union goal and a great team effort the scores were level at half-time. However before the break Union suffered a blow when a Dereham pass hit a Union foot and deflected up at close range into Mike Banham's shoulder which would affect the team in the second half.

Dereham came out in the second half and scored 2 quick goals, as the half went on they increased their dominance as Mike Banham's arm began to make him struggle and the defence started to find it difficult to cope with the mounting attacks. Despite more good goalkeeping by Morely Dereham continued to add goals.

The final score did not reflect the committed performance by the team in adverse weather and all who played should be proud of their achievements.

Division 5NE

1/12/07

Norwich Union IV 3

Norwich City IV 2

Union made a slow start to this match and City took the initiative and took advantage with an early goal scored by Cushion with a deflection over the Union keeper from a short corner.

This fired Union into action and they made an immediate response equalising through a Mike Banham strike from a short corner. Union continued to attack their opponents and took the lead when Paul Kiwanuka scored his first goal for the club deflecting a cross from the wing beyond the keeper. This was the score at half-time and Union made one change at the interval but went out to carry on as they had left off.

Early in the second half Union increased their lead when Alan Quinton finished off a smooth passing move with a clinical finish from the top of the D. The match was flowing from end to end and few chances were being created. City pulled a goal back when Union's defence were slow to react when an initial City shot was saved by the Union keeper but the rebound was turned in from close range. Union managed to see the match out without any further anxious moments to move within 1 point of City and to remain above 3 teams in the division.

It was encouraging to see the excellent reaction by the team to falling a goal behind so early in the match.

Division 5NE

24/11/07

Bury III 4

Norwich Union IV 1

Union faced opponents who had been relegated from the division above in the previous season. Bury started the match quickest and Union were immediately under pressure and initially managed to contain their hosts. The barrage of attacks finally became overwhelming and Bury scored 2 goals in quick succession.

This adversity was to show Union's fighting qualities as they then started to take the game to their opponents and accurate passes between the defenders saw the forwards start to get into space and attack the D. A strong pressing action by the forwards started to put the Bury defenders under pressure and force them into errors. A quick Bury break against the run of play increased their lead to 3-0 at the interval.

The half-time team talk stressed the need to carry on the good play that had seen the half end with and to attempt to win the second half.

Bury increased their lead in the second half when a quickly taken free-hit from the wrong place allowed the forward to have time and space to put his shot in the corner. Union were not down heartened and continued to attack and were rewarded when a strong run down the wing by Vaneerten saw him put a hard cross into the D which Tom Kiwanuka controlled well before shooting past the keeper. A good marking role was played by Andy Key in the second half.

No further score came despite Union pressing but this was a good performance by the team which bodes well for future games.

Division 1

17/11/07

Vauxhall 1

Norwich Union 1

It's a long way to Luton...

Union travelled away to sunny Bedfordshire this weekend to face Vauxhall Hockey Club. Initially looking like being amongst the divisional whipping boys, Vauxhall have shown an improvement in form capped off by an 8-2 stuffing of Cambridge Uni. It seemed that they were another side good at scoring and just as good at letting them in.

Union arrived rather early having failed to find a supermarket near the ground to stock up on post-match essentials. Four out of the pool of defenders were missing but the desperate nature of events had managed to coerce the legendary 'Foxy' from his marathon-running exploits. Even so this left the skipper at centre back and the adaptable Ash Green moving in to the right-hand side. Training this week had made a point about the concept of warming up and with a good first-team turnout for once it seemed to have hit home. Despite hindrance from a seemingly unending (very late starting) match on before us, union ran through a number of drills and hit the pitch to go straight into a five-a-side game to up the intensity.

With the popular three-man-weave and some defensive shadowing practise thrown in for good measure, we met the whistle ready to go.

It was a good start for union, much improved from recent sloth-like affairs and the ball was soon moving quickly around the pitch. Vauxhall adopted a style for which Asian-dominated sides are renowned with some tricky running off the ball and passes carefully placed to exploit the spaces. After ten minutes of deadlock a defensive mistake by the captain was seized on and well finished with John trying in vain to cover the whole goal at once. Union fought on but were under the cosh a bit for a while longer. They slowly began to regain confidence and hit home via Alex who capitalised on a recovered short corner fumble to thunder home. Other short corners came and went, mainly due to the undulating terrain at the top of the clubhouse end. With the game in a state of parity, both sides struggled hard for dominance. When Simmo was axed in the middle of the park, union gained a one-man advantage and things looked rosy. This became even more pronounced after a fracas involving team firebrand Williams resulted in another yellow card for Vauxhall and a death threat for both Hywel and the umpire. An enquiry of a maternal nature may have inflamed things somewhat. For a brief moment the two sides looked to be facing off like the armies of Troy and Greece but eventually the game

was restarted without a single maiming. With two extra players, union looked to be very much on top of events. Vauxhall retreated to defence, their main outlet being speculative aerial balls hurled by their trebuchet-inspired rearguard. These were well dealt with by the union defence. Meanwhile union were able to attack in numbers. Foxy pushed up the middle of the pitch and the ball started to reach the forwards in good positions. Union managed to get some shots away, although these were well dealt with. Half time, two extra players and the scored level. It couldn't be much better!

Union returned from the break to face the nine. They surged forward. Tom even had a shot. Unfortunately there was still no chink further chink in the Vauxhall armour. A nine became ten the game became more frantic and once it was back to 11-a-side Vauxhall pushed forwards. Union started to get panicked and make mistakes. Vauxhall produced their bucket of skill and became harder to contain. In the end, neither side could put the game away and perhaps neither deserved to take full points. Vauxhall had the better of the final moments but Union could still have snatched it. 1-1 was a fair result.

After a reminder in the shower of possible death had been and gone, Union partook of the jolly nice teas in a boardroom environment and then took their leave. The return fixture could well be one to watch. Man of the match award went to John Livings in goal. Some very good saves, in particular against a dangerous short-corner dragflicker kept the match open to the end. Special commitment notice goes to Foxy who 'wasn't amused' mid-week but had to admit to having had quite a bit of fun. My apologies to Simmo – he was last week's uncredited man of the match.

Division 5NE

17/11/07

Norwich Union IV 5

Cranes II 0

This was a vital match for Union against one of the two teams below them in the division. In the team talk before the game it was stressed to not allow the fact the opposition only had 10 players to allow complacency to enter Union's play.

Union made the perfect start after the team talk taking an early lead through an Alan Quinton goal. The lead was increased after Mike Banham fired home a short corner between goalkeeper and defender. Further chances were created but Union couldn't make their superiority count and before half-time tiredness resulted in some poor marking which allowed Cranes to create pressure on the Union defence.

At half-time a few changes were made by Union to freshen things up and try to convert the pressure into goals. The lead was increased in the second half through a goal by Patrick Vaneerten and Mike Banham converted another short corner to make the score 4-0. A fifth goal was added to the tally when Tom Kiwanuka scored his first goal for the club in only his third appearance with a close range finish at the back post. Though more chances were created Union could not increase their lead. Cranes didn't let the scoreline stop them from competing all match with their young forwards working hard and though he had little to do Steve Manning in the Union goal when called on ensured that Union would keep their first clean sheet of the season.

This was a good performance by Union with all 14 players in the squad contributing to the victory.

Division 5NE

10/11/07

Harleston Magpies VI 3

Norwich Union IV 1

Due to late withdrawals Union only had a bare 11 players with outfield player Andy Key having to don the goalkeepers equipment. Union didn't let this adversity affect their early play starting the stronger and this pressure was converted into a lead when Ray Hansell scored his first goal for many years for Union coming into the D from right back and hitting a crisp first time shot that arrowed into the corner of the goal. Union nearly doubled their lead when a Banham shot from a short corner was stopped by a defender on the line.

Ollie Ireland in centre midfield was allowing the Harleston playmaker no time and space. Harleston equalised from a controversially awarded short corner with a hard shot that could not be stopped. Union continued to press and create chances but the score remained level at half-time.

Early in the second half Harleston increased their lead from another short corner but Union bounced back to dominate play. The Harleston keeper continued to prevent Union from getting back on level terms and decisions went against Union inside the Harleston D that may have turned the match.

Harleston made the game safe when a Union pass was intercepted on half-way and a quick break punished the mistake with a killer goal. Union fought to the end but could not get a goal back.

This was a great team performance which if repeated in weeks to come will see Union return to winning ways. Special mention to Paul and Tom Kiwanuka in their second game for the team who slotted into the team well and showed great improvement.

Division 5NE

3/11/07

Norwich Union IV 0

North Walsham II 2

This match started with only the Union umpire officiating as the Walsham umpire had gone to UEA and had to be collected by the Walsham substitute. This situation lasted for the whole of the first half.

Union started the match the stronger and were putting the opposition under pressure. From a short corner a Banham shot was stopped on the line but against the run of play Walsham opened the scoring at a short corner from close range. Just before half-time Union were reduced to 10 men when Wagstaff was shown the yellow card.

The Walsham umpire arrived for the second half and despite being down to 10 men Union still continued to press forward. Walsham then scored a goal which had a very unsporting smell to it. A foul was given to Walsham just inside their half but when the Union captain returned the ball from where it had come to rest over their defensive backline Walsham took the free hit without allowing the Union captain to return to marking the centre forward who took advantage to score.

Union continued to try to find a way back into the match but couldn't break the Walsham defensive line down. Special mention to Glenn Tobias who had a solid match in defence and Ray Hansell playing out of position in midfield.

Division 1

27/10/07

Norwich Union 0

Croestyx 8

With two wins under their belts, union arrived at 'fortress' Pinebanks in a solid mid-table position. Their opposition, Croestyx, were one of two teams with a 100% record but their wins had not been against the league's stronger sides and there was hope that they could be knocked off their perch. Croestyx arrived very early, maybe 90 minutes before the game. "They're keen" was the comment from many. The captain suggested that maybe they just got their journey time wrong and set about trying to assuage any fears before we started. Unfortunately there proved to be rather a lot to fear as a slightly depleted union midfield came up against a well-oiled Croestyx machine and the defence were outfoxed by some very good attacking skills.

1, 2, 3... union were seriously in trouble almost from the whistle. Head went down and the first 25 minutes were purgatory. Perhaps things only got better when Croestyx got complacent? Whatever the reason, the half-time score was a cringe-making 7-0.

Building on a few attacking successes of the later stages, union regrouped somewhat and dug in their heels. Confidence grew and teeth were gritted. Short corners were won by some good marauding, especially along the right flank but were not despatched as the recently dangerous shooting was fluffed and failed to trouble a solid keeper. Croestyx won the second half by a goal to leave the final total 8-0. Five excellent goals by

striker Gareth Ingram were the highlight of a spectator-friendly performance and underlined where union desperately need to improve. Training anyone?

Man of the match award went to Robert 'Shaggy' Wagstaff, who was a tower of strength at right back. Back to the drawing board for the rest of us.

Division 3NE

27/10/07

Norwich Union II 4

Ipswich & East Suffolk II 0

The 2's were against IES 2's who are currently proppin gup the bottom of Division 3NE. However, despite having most of the possession and territory Union made hard work of the first half going in at the break 0-0. The second half saw a revived Union 11 take the lead early in the second half and their lead was increased shortly after following a nice combination down the right hand side between Phillis and Hamilton which ended with Phillis putting the ball past the keeper from close range. Unions dominance paid as as two further goals finished the game off.

Division 4NE

27/10/07

UEA II 0

Norwich Union III 4

An amazing display by the 3rds in the first half snuffed out the opposition before they had a chance to light the tinder. Kirby made the score sheet with a deflected shot to make it 1-0 then, Kirby set up Birchy for well executed 3 yard goal for 2-0. The 3rd goal was a nicely taken short by Moquade and the 4th was a Kirby solo effort to make it 4-0 with 5 minutes to spare in the first half. All who played deserve a big pat on the back, there buckets of skill were well and truly full. Although there were no goals in the second half the team still kept up the effort and came away with a well deserved clean sheet and confidence boost for the season. Bring on Dereham.

Division 5NE

27/10/07

Thetford Town 6

Norwich Union IV 1

Union went behind to an early strike and then were forced into a defensive rearrangement when Tobias was injured. Some excellent goalkeeping by Millar frustrated the Thetford forwards but just before half-time two more goals were scored to put Union 3-0 down. Despite the score-line Union's heads did not drop and they continued to battle hard in the second half. A fourth goal was conceded and then a flick was awarded against Union and in a harsh decision the offending Union player was shown the yellow card. A great save from Millar prevented the flick from being converted. Thetford increased their lead to 5 goals but this saw Union have their best spell of play in the game and saw them score with their first chance from a great shot from Vaneerten. A further Union player was yellow carded for dissent and Thetford added their final goal. In the second half Ollie Ireland performed an excellent man to man marking role on the Bury midfield playmaker and Alan Quinton played a solid role at the centre of the rearranged defence. The team deserve great credit for battling on to the end despite the scoreline.

Division 1

20/10/07

Shefford & Sandy 0

Norwich Union 1

Union travelled away this weekend to the village of Sandy, nestling in Bedfordshire between Bedford and St Neots. Shefford and Sandy were yet to win a point and union were still lifted by their comfortable win of the week before. Despite this, the skipper urged an air of caution and extolled the need for some good play.

After shaking the minibus trip out of their legs the men from union settled into the task at hand. There was some promising play right from the start and the S&S speculative early forays were snuffed out efficiently by the 'big men' at the back. A skirmish for physical superiority was soon underway with the umpires failing to stamp immediately down on some ugly play. Naturally this led to Richard 'They let this animal teach children?' Smith squaring up to his opponent. It wasn't all that long before the umpires decided to clamp down and also to attempt to stop the increasing backchat. Why they chose to do this when Chris 'This guy teaches too, must be a stressful job' Simmonds asked his captain a question is anyone's guess but the need for some tongue-biting was clear.

An open game developed as union played some attractive passing hockey and S&S sought to counter through quick running and passing moves. Short corners were awarded at both ends but neither side was able to make good use of them. Meanwhile, someone's luck was running out. A justifiable green card for Hywel 'Animal' Williams was followed soon after with a yellow which appeared to some a bit tough. The umpire's assertion that Hywel knew exactly what he was doing has yet to be backed up by evidence at any point.

Half time and it was 0-0. This was felt to be a good position for union, whose second half performances have tended to outshine their first. Williams was returned from the sin-bin and the captain delivered what was later adjudged to be an 'inspirational' speech.

Inspiring maybe, but union were made to work very hard. Despite looking good going forward, union were still not troubling the opposition keeper. A ten minute period of pressure by S&S produced numerous short corners and at least one reasonable shout for a stroke as sticks flew in and tackles were missed in all manner of tired and ugly play. S&S were unable to produce a routine capable of piercing the union defence although John 'Speed of a Puma' Livings was forced into some crisp saves.

In the later stages, union started to gain some ascendancy as S&S looked to have blown themselves out. A short corner was won, the injection didn't stick in the pitch or jump over a raised line and the captain put a less-than-convincing flick into the net.

Beer, cider, cheese, wine and rugby all followed and though South Africa deservedly triumphed in the world cup, all of Union's men's teams won on the day. Congratulations all round.

Division 4NE

20/10/07

Norwich Union III 2

Watton 1

Captain went just shy of getting everyone to group hug at the beginning of the game, but tried to instil the thought that we should care if we lost. Chris Millar again made a terrific save to keep us in the game and by the end of the first half we were 1-0 up. In the second half we played well again and deserved our second goal. In the last 10 minutes Watton scored what can only be called a consolation goal and with 2 minutes to go the NUrds took the ball to the corner and it was all over. Everyone wanted to win and good simple hockey made it possible. Next week sees us away to UEA 2nds, it was a close game last year, so will be good to get a strong side out to beat the layabout students.

Division 5NE

20/10/07

Norwich Union IV 3

Bury IV 2

Norwich Union scored within a minute of the start of the match with quick sharp passing resulting in Ady Kemp setting up Alan Quinton for a close range goal. The next 10 minutes saw Union create many chances but the Bury goalkeeper make good saves to keep his team in it. A Bury player was then injured reducing them to 10 men but this affected Union more than Bury and Bury started to find space in midfield for them to dribble forward and Union were stunned when they conceded two goals scored by Over and Longfield to be behind at half-time. At the break changes were made and the positive 10 minutes stressed and the need to return to this level of play. Early in the second half Union equalised when Ady Kemp finished off another good move. Bury were not being allowed into the match due to an excellent man marking job by Kirby on the Bury dangerman. Any short corners awarded to Bury were being comfortably dealt with by Morley in goal and the defence. Union found a winner when Quinton scored his second of the game once again as a result of the understanding developing between him and Ady Kemp. Union managed to see the match out to win their first league match of the season and move off the bottom of the table.

Division 5NE

6/10/07

Norfolk Nomads 2

Norwich Union IV 2

Despite playing with 10 men and having to use an outfield player as goalkeeper Union got a good result and were pressing hard for the win in the later stages of the game. Union went behind in the first half when a cross was turned in at the back post. Refusing to be dashed Union bounced back when Nomads paused waiting for an umpires decision which didn't come and Union reacted quickly crossing the ball from the right for Ady Kemp to turn the ball in. In the second half Union still pressed and took the lead with a low shot by Mike Banham from a short corner. Nomads equalised quickly with a close range effort but Union ended the match the stronger looking the team more likely to get the winner. Special mention to the hard work of the midfield of Quinton, Hipper, Richardson and Hansell the latter three all playing their first or second games of the season. A solid display as goalkeeper by Andy Key helping out due to a shortage of keepers.

Division 3NE

29/9/07

Harleston Magpies IV 1

Norwich Union II 0

The 2nd team lost 1-0 at the weekend to Magpies 4. It was a good game and one that we should have won but a 10 second momentary lapse of concentration at the start of the second half allowed magpies to score with a shot from the top of the D through a crowded penalty area. NU pile on the pressure but just couldn't find that final touch to put the ball in the net.

Division 4NE

29/9/07

Norwich Union III 2

Gorleston 0

A fairley even first half, if anything Gorleston perhaps had more of the pressure but neither side created much. Key Moment : New Boy Duncan Evans made the pass of the match, firm pass out of defence which tipped the balance in our favour as it took out their main man at the knee :-)! Good work from other new boys Dan Newman (ex Broadland) & James Clapson (ex UEA) in midfield, plus a solid 3rd team debut from Martin Lee helped secure a 1st win for new Captain Dr Draeger.

Division 5NE

29/9/07

Norwich Union IV 1

Harleston Magpies V 3

Harleston started the match the stronger and Union were forced to weather a lot of pressure but did not allow Harleston to convert this into chances. As the match developed it became more even with some good Union passing creating chances and short corners but the Harleston keeper made some good stops and the game remained goalless at half-time. Union came out in the second half determined to carry on pressuring their opposition and this brought it's reward when Vaneerten deflected a long corner in at the near post to give Union the lead. For a while this unsettled Magpies but as the game reached it's later stages the lack of a substitute saw Union begin to tire. Magpies took advantage of this when Weir was first to react to the loose ball after a save from the Union keeper and turned the ball in from close range. Magpies increased their lead from a Hayward shot low inside the post from a short corner and they completed the scoring to give them a rather flattering scoreline with a shot from Mann. This was an encouraging performance from Union against opposition who had been relegated from the division above. If this is repeated in coming weeks the team will achieve positive results.

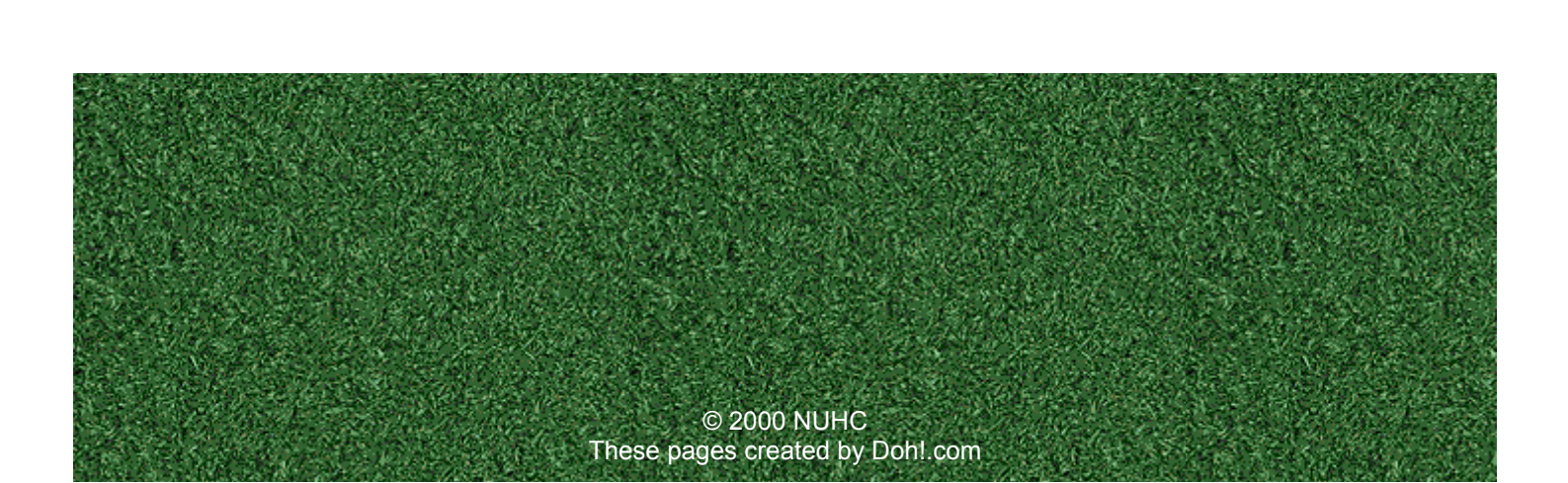
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22/9/07

Norwich Union IV 1

Holt 3

Union made a good start to the game playing fast passing with midfield and attack linking well and the forward partnership of Kemp and Quinton forming a good partnership. Holt were being awarded a large number of short corners but the defence and goalkeeper were able to stand firm. Union then showed Holt how to finish a short corner when the ball was switched round the D before being crossed to Kemp in front of goal to finish from close range. Union began to exert pressure but couldn't create another goalscoring chance and were made to pay when against the run of play Holt broke quickly and equalised just before half-time. It had been a good first-half display by the Union team. The second half saw Holt score twice with well struck shots that gave the Union keeper no chance. Union had some more attacking opportunities but couldn't find the net again. The team defended particularly well when on 2 occasions they went down to 10 men when the captain was sinbinned (Sorry Guys!). A special mention to Richard Willson who played a good game at right back.



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