

Sunday 12th September 2010.

Grafton Veterans v Brentham Veterans.

Team:-

Adrian Lovett

Pete Hoban
Dave Sellers
Paul James
Tony Georgiou

Neil Graveney
Tom Rice
Eamonn Malone
Colin Livingstone

Mick Duffy
Colin Matthews

Subs:-

Chris Firmin
Nigel Green
Alan Hedley
Mick Eames

On a gloriously sunny Sunday morning, Brentham Veterans made the long journey to New Malden to take on Grafton Veterans. The half dozen Brentham Veterans who turned up early were shocked to hear Mike Miley had celebrated his 60th birthday by holding a party – but not inviting any of the veterans – apart from his comedic partner Pete Hoban. In addition, Mr Grose had celebrated his birthday at the same bash without inviting his chums either! They obviously didn't want the riff-raff to turn up at the party, however, at least they declared themselves unavailable for the Grafton game, and hopefully their hangovers were enjoyably obtained.

The Big Tosser lost the toss and Brentham kicked off with the sun shining on their backs as they took the game to Grafton with Brentham enjoying the majority of possession. Neil Graveney was distributing the ball well, and as usual, Tom Rice and Eamonn Malone were making surging runs from midfield. The two Colin's were creating half chances with Big Colin firing over from outside the Grafton box, and little Colin, despite having a heavily strapped ankle after falling down a rabbit hole the day before at golf, bringing a fine save from the Grafton keeper who turned Colin's strike onto the post and behind for a corner.

Despite Brentham pressure, they couldn't turn their possession into goals, and against the run of play, Grafton took the lead after 25 minutes. Adrian took possession of the ball after another Grafton attack petered out and inexplicably through the ball out to a Grafton player who accepted the gift and fired over the head of Adrian and into the back of the Brentham net. 1-0 to the hosts. Despite the setback, Brentham resumed their offensive on the Grafton goal and forced several corners. On 35 minutes, Colin Matthews drove a corner into the 6 yard box which Duffy met with his hand (not intentionally), with the ball going into the back of the Grafton net via Duffy's

ankle from 1 yard. A brilliant finish from the striker from his kind of distance. 1-1. The half ended 'all square', although Brentham could consider themselves unlucky as they had most of the game, but found the opposition goalkeeper in inspired form. Jamesey and Sellers walked off hand in hand at half time, despite having a tiff halfway through the first half.

Half Time: Grafton Veterans 1-1 Brentham Veterans.

The second half resumed with only two of the four Brentham subs being used as the game was in the balance, but once again Brentham took the game to Grafton. Pete Hoban and Alan Hedley were providing the two wide men with plenty of the ball, but Brentham were also losing possession too easily, too many times. Adrian was mainly a spectator as Brentham mounted wave after wave of attacks until eventually they took the lead after approximately 65 minutes. Colin Livingstone played a brilliant through ball to Tom Rice who had made another run from midfield, this time Tom touched the ball past the Grafton goalkeeper before finishing well to record his third goal in two games to regain his lead at the top of the goals coring charts. A fine finish from the full back.

Grafton began to enjoy more of the ball as Brentham sat back on their lead, then on 75 minutes, they won a free kick around 35 yards from Brentham's goal line. The free kick was hit directly into the Brentham wall, but Tom Rice was penalised for hand ball as he protected his face from the ball. The resultant free kick was again struck directly at the Brentham wall who had now lined up inside their own penalty box. Once again the referee penalised Tom Rice as the ball was smacked against his hand – penalty. Brentham protested vehemently, and the Captain also queries the decision at length, resulting in quite a long delay for the Grafton penalty taker who eventually stepped up and fired the ball wide of Adrian's right hand post. This let-off spurred Brentham into action and they had chances to kill the game off, with Duffy having a 'goal' ruled out for offside, Eamonn Malone hitting the post and Colin Livingstone firing over from inside the Grafton box when he had more time than he thought. The Grafton keeper was also continuing to pull off save after save. From one of his outstanding saves, the resultant corner was cleared by the Grafton defence who broke down their left flank, unfortunately Mick Eames was caught the wrong side of the Grafton winger who carried it forward before squaring the ball to a Grafton forward who fired the ball through Adrian and into the Brentham net for an undeserved equaliser in the 85th minute. Brentham resumed their pressure from the kick off and Eamonn Malone brought yet another save off the home keeper and Duffy wasted an opportunity to win the game. Two more corners were forced, and from one, Eamonn found Duffy at the back post who headed the ball back across the Grafton area where Paul James thumped a header against the Grafton crossbar with the defence managing to clear the rebounded ball – Today wasn't to be!

The referee blew for full time on a disappointing result for Brentham who just couldn't convert their superiority into goals. On a positive note, they remain unbeaten in the season, a sentence which hopefully be repeated for many weeks to come. Overall a fine performance from Brentham, particularly Neil Graveney, Tom Rice and Eamonn Malone, but another week has seen Brentham give the ball away too easily and too many times and two mistakes cost Brentham the spoils on the day.

Thank you to everyone who took part.

Final Score:- Grafton Veterans 2- 2 Brentham Veterans.
(Duffy 1, Rice 1,)

Next game (Home) v Holiport Veterans.