

Sunday March 13th 2011.

National Physics Laboratories Veterans v Brentham Veterans.

Team:-

Adrian Lovett

John Rodgers

Mike Miley

Mark Langley-Sowter

Dave Grose

Nigel Green

Tom Rice

Neil Graveney

Tony Georgiou

Mick Duffy

Colin Matthews

Sub:-

Colin Livingstone.

It was pi**ing down as the Brentham Veterans turned up at the National Physics Laboratories (NPL) to play their Veterans, however, they had to do a U turn at the main gate as they were directed in the back door (ooo er missus!) and made to park three and a half miles away from the club house, resulting in a damp walk to the changing rooms. There was a young ladies game going on at the grounds which immediately meant Marky Mark would be late turning up as he would be sure to be wearing his dark glasses as he ogled the young girlies from the sidelines.

Brentham commandeered the changing room with the least leaks, which meant there was just one shower in the corner of the changing room (apart from the players), but the threadbare carpet that was down was soaking wet. Mick Eames had commented on the massive rave that his friend in Japan had been attending over the last few days, and Colin Matthews asked for suggestions on who could represent Brentham Veterans to collect charity money on Red nose day, but nobody could think of anyone apt enough for the job. Marky Mark then turned up late – with his dark glasses on.

Brentham are having a mini injury crisis with several players out injured at the moment, and Malone on another stag do – probably, so they only had twelve players to choose from, and within those twelve, four were carrying knocks, particularly Colin Matthews, who was involved in a car crash on the Friday morning and was suffering from whiplash injuries, which was making a change, as Marky Mark usually suffers from whip lash injuries! Colin did however, have nice yellow socks. Paul Navarre had ‘cried off’ with gastro enteritis on the morning, which was strange as he was perfectly well when the top scorer had gone around to Duffy’s the night before for dinner.

The two teams took to the tacky (as in muddy and wet) pitch with Brentham looking to avenge recent results against a NPL team who

for some reason had the upper hand against Brentham over the last couple of seasons, which was a mystery as Brentham have played and beaten better teams than NPL within that time. The Big Tosser won the toss as usual and chose to attack the clubhouse end of the pitch. NPL kicked off and the game began at a slow pace as both teams tried to gain the upper hand, but also because both teams contained players who play at a slow pace. Brentham began to force the pace and began to play delightful football to feet. On 20 minutes, Brentham took the lead when John Rodgers took a throw in to Duffy on the edge of the NPL area, Duffy managed to turn his defender before playing the ball to Matthews who from 10 yards curled the ball around the NPL keeper to give the visitors the lead. Brentham were buoyed by the goal and it showed as they began playing with confidence. Neil Graveney tried an effort from 30 yards which just flew over the NPL bar, but this proved a sighter for Tom Rice who on 25 minutes picked the ball up 35 yards out, and fired in a shot that flew into the NPL goalkeeper's top right hand corner for what surely is a contender for goal of the season. The goal has been caught on Mick Eames's video recorder and he will be forwarding the footage to the BBC to use in their goal of the season competition, but remember, there's no prize, so don't ring in and waste your money. Brentham were now flying and within five minutes they had increased their lead when a through ball from Brentham's midfield was latched onto by Nigel Green. As the last NPL defender slipped, Nigel found himself through one on one with the NPL keeper, however, he passed the ball square to Duffy who finished from 6 yards and robbed the Rice Unit of the goal of the season with an absolutely fantastic tap-in which will no doubt win the competition at the end of the season, and in the process it established Nigel Green's place in the team for the rest of the season.

At 3-0 up after half an hour, Brentham began to press the self-destruct button as they began to give the ball away sloppily, and from one such mis-placed pass, NPL played a long through ball which their speedy Billy Whizz ran on to and calmly slotted the ball over the onrushing Adrian on the edge of his box for a fine finish. This time it was NPL who took belief from the goal, and within 5 minutes they scored a second. Brentham conceded a free kick on the right hand side of their box by the touch line. NPL fired in the free kick and it found the head of their balding forward who made amends for his free header miss earlier in the game by heading past Adrian who had no chance. It was now 2-3 to the visitors, and Brentham were shocked into a response which came in the 43rd minute when Neil Graveney played the ball into Duffy's feet inside the NPL penalty area, the forward rode two challenges before laying the ball back to Tony Georgiou who had the simple task of firing the ball into an empty net, however, unselfishly, Tony passed the ball to Nigel Green at the far post who tapped in to continue his fine scoring form. Although it looked as if Tony had mis-kicked the ball, there is no doubting it was a pass as Tony is such an unselfish player – just like Nigel Green. The referee brought the half to an end which had been very entertaining for the crowd of seven, which included Chris Firmin who had turned up to see if his twin brother was playing for the opposition – which he was.

Half time: NPL Veterans 2-4 Brentham Veterans.

Brentham kicked off the second half and were soon into the groove as they pushed forward looking to extend their lead. Within five minutes of the second half, Brentham were denied a penalty when Colin Matthews was upended in the NPL box by a crude challenge, amazingly the replacement referee waived play on with the NPL players chuckling as they knew they had 'got away with it'. On 55

minutes, Tom Rice, who had had the goal of the season taken away from him by Duffy's excellent finish decided to try his luck again, this time from 30 yards. Unfortunately for Tom, the ball hit the inside of the NPL upright before flying back across the goal where Nigel Green was unlucky not to finish as he hit the side netting while under pressure from a NPL defender.

NPL were now beginning to apply pressure to the Brentham defence as they began pushing players forward, however, Mike Miley, Marky Mark, Dave Grose and John Rodgers had everything under control as they repelled NPL, however, NPL did break through the middle on 65 minutes, but Adrian made an excellent save low down to his left to palm the ball out for a corner. The corner was one of approximately twelve that NPL won throughout the second half, mainly due to the disciplined Brentham defence, and the heroics of Adrian who made another flying save to his right to push a fine strike around his post. NPL were trying to gain a slight advantage by taking their corners about five yards in from the corner flag due to a pool of water next to the flag, but the deliveries were met with either Mike Miley or Tom Rice clearing the danger, however, the ball kept coming back to the Brentham defence with alarming regularity as NPL searched for another goal to claw themselves back into the game.

Brentham were finding it hard to get hold of the ball in the NPL half, as they were being pushed back, however, from one break, Colin Matthews tried his luck from outside the NPL box which brought a fine save by the NPL keeper. With 8 minutes remaining, a loose ball was bouncing in the middle of the park and the NPL replacement centre half shouted "have it" as he booted the ball high in the air. A couple of minutes later, the ball came down, unfortunately for Brentham and Adrian, it came down behind Adrian and into the

Brentham net for what was either a fluke, or a cracking goal – flukey ba*tard.

NPL thought they could salvage something from the game and threw men forward, but Adrian made another stunning save to keep the hosts at bay. From the resulting corner, Adrian appeared to be impeded as the corner was taken, but the referee waived play on as a cross was played back into the Brentham box and only just missed by baldy who could have equalised. Brentham made their feelings known to the referee who didn't see anything wrong as he usually watched rugby – plank.

Brentham weathered the final onslaught and the plank blew his whistle for full time giving Brentham their first win over NPL in three seasons, an excellent result considering the amount of players missing for Brentham on the day. The players made their way back to the en-suite showers, so they could get changed out of their wet and muddy kit before going into the showers. In the en-suite, Mike Miley began talking about beer which voice activated Dave Grose's phone/beer talk sensor. It is now apparent that Dave Grose has got a new technology phone which he has set up so that any team mates talking about beers or getting together, will activate his phone so that he never misses out on a beer session – how cool is that?!!!

A game of two halves today where Brentham bossed the first half and played delightful football, however, the second half proved a bit of a challenge as they hung on grimly at the end to get another win which extends their excellent start to 2011. Fine performances from John Rodgers, Mike Miley, Marky Mark and Dave Grose, with Adrian Lovett making some excellent saves to keep NPL at bay. Absolutely no competition on who Man of the Match was - Nigel Green. Tom

Rice's excellent goal scoring season continues, and Duffy will be inviting him to dinner next Saturday evening to discuss further.

Final Score: NPL Veterans 3-4 Brentham Veterans.

(Matthews 1, Rice 1, Duffy 1, Green 1)

Next game away v Hook Veterans – Sunday 20th March 2011.