

Sunday March 20th 2011.

Hook Veterans v Brentham Veterans.

Team:-

Adrian Lovett

John Rodgers

Mike Miley

Mark Langley-Sowter

Dave Grose

Nigel Green

Neil Graveney

Colin Livingstone

Tony Georgiou

Mick Duffy

Colin Matthews

Sub:-

Alan Hedley

On a glorious sunny, Spring Sunday morning, Brentham Veterans made their way over to East Molesey to take on Captain Hook and his Veterans at Old Tiffinians ground. This was the second trip to the ground for one particular Brentham Veteran this season, whereas the rest of the squad were making their first trip. Mick Eames was being consoled in the dressing room for a valiant attempt by the Welsh ba*tards to win the Six nations championship, and no doubt he will be consoled again next week when England thrash the soccer team's sorry ar*es in a Euro 2012 qualifier.

Unfortunately, Marky Mark turned up in the correct kit this week, so there was no need for him to get changed again. Brentham Veterans will be playing in yellow next week. Both teams took to the farmer's field which could have done with a roller on it, the only thing that was missing were cow pats – fortunately. Neil Graveney was making his 100th appearance for Brentham Veterans and he was deservedly given a round of applause and the metaphorical Captain's armband for the day. The Hook referee brought the two Captains together, and the Scouse tosser won the toss. There was a delay to the start of the game as the referee couldn't find the money he had used to toss up with, however, Neil gave it back eventually and Hook kicked off attacking the farmer's shed end of the ground. The pitch was making it difficult for both teams to try and control the ball and it meant a scrappy start to the game with Hook trying to bring their speedy wingers in the game at every opportunity, but Dave Grose and John Rodgers were up to the task. On 10 minutes, Dave Grose received a dead leg which meant he had to leave the field to be replaced by Alan Hedley who was still recovering from a late evening working at Tesco's – maybe an excuse Dave Grose could use when he rolls up hungover on a Sunday morning.

On 20 minutes Brentham created the first real opportunity of the game when Colin Matthews engineered some space for himself on the edge of the Hook box before curling in a left footed effort which the Hook goalkeeper got his finger tips to, which diverted the ball onto the Hook post and back across the 6 yard box before it was hooped clear by a Hook defender. Brentham were now taking command of the game with Alan Hedley's distribution from left back setting up Brentham attacks on the right side of the Hook penalty area. From one attack, Hook conceded a free kick 35 yards out. Darren Anderton floated

in a cross which was cleared by Hook who immediately started a counter attack which saw their left winger fly down his wing before crossing to the right winger who had found space for himself in the Brentham box before he coolly slotted past Adrian to give Hook the lead against the run of play. Brentham continued to dominate and Neil Graveney fed Duffy down the right hand side of the Hook penalty area. As the Hook players claimed for offside, Duffy crossed the ball to Tony Georgiou who met the cross with a fierce shot which somehow the Hook goalkeeper pushed onto the crossbar before the Hook defence cleared once again. Brentham were forcing several corners, and Matthews was delivering some excellent balls into the Hook area, and Nigel Green was unlucky to see his far post header just go the wrong side of the Hook post.

Marky Mark and Mike Miley were snuffing out any threat down the centre of the pitch, and Neil Graveney was having an inspired game as captain, despite being 'robbed' of the referees coin prior to kick off. Duffy was next to fire a shot towards goal, but his effort cleared the Hook crossbar. Although Brentham were 'huffing and puffing' they couldn't blow down the Hook defence who were being marshalled well by their two centre halves and the half was brought to an end by the Hook referee with the hosts going off at half time with an undeserved lead.

Half-time: Hook Veterans 1-0 Brentham Veterans.

Dave Grose took the referees whistle as the referee donned his Hook kit, and Dave donned a yellow shirt to referee the second half. Brentham kicked off and again had the majority of possession as they searched for an equaliser. John Rodgers was ably supporting Nigel Green down the right hand side of the park, with Alan Hedley providing Tony Georgiou with plenty of ball down the left. On 55 minutes, Colin Matthews played Nigel Green in for a one on one with the Hook keeper, but the custodian was up to the challenge as he saved Nigel's effort with his feet and the ball was once again cleared to safety. Five minutes later, Duffy played the ball to Colin Matthews inside the Hook area, and again, with only the keeper to beat, he fired a shot which was saved by the keeper's leg as the ball was heading just inside the post. It appeared that Brentham were going to have 'one of those days' with the Hook goalkeeper having an outstanding game. Again they pushed forward, and won a free kick

30 yards outside the Hook penalty area. Dave Grose stepped out 10 paces in his capacity as referee, which meant the wall was actually only 4 yards from the ball when Colin Matthews blasted it into the Hook wall before it was hooped up the pitch and away to safety. With 20 minutes remaining, more bad luck for Darren Anderton when his knee 'gave way' again, and he had to hobble off the pitch. Dave Grose relinquished his refereeing duties and took his place in midfield with Mick Eames taking the referees whistle. Dave Grose, who by now had recovered from his 'dead leg' was getting involved straight away in the middle of the pitch, and his ball winning skills resulted in Colin Matthews taking delivery of the ball and crossing to the Hook Far post were Duffy controlled the ball before being unceremoniously dumped on the ground by a rash Hook challenge – penalty. The nice Welshman had no hesitation giving the penalty, even though it was an Englishman who had been fouled. Colin Matthews took responsibility, and although he couldn't find the actual penalty spot on the farmers field, he placed the ball 12 yards from goal before thumping the ball down the middle, but once again the Hook keeper made a save with his leg, fortunately for Colin, the ball came back to him to give him a second opportunity to score, this time his shot found the net, but only off the despairing goalkeeper who almost kept Colin's second effort out as well. The Hook keeper was doing so much work keeping his team in the game, the game had to be stopped for five minutes when he was treated for cramp!

Brentham now had the scent of blood in their nostrils, and went for the kill. With 10 minutes left, Duffy played a one-two with Matthews in the Hook penalty area before the burly centre forward bulldozed his way through a Hook challenge before firing past the Hook keeper to give Brentham the lead they deserved. Brentham, having taken the lead for the first time were still pushing forward and forced another corner with 8 minutes to go. Once again Colin Matthews swung in an excellent cross which Marky Mark met with a bullet header, but just as the ball looked as if it was going to cross the goal line, Nigel Green got his knee to the ball and cleared it from the Hook line. Thankfully, instead of listening to Marky Mark talk about his goal for an hour after the match, Nigel had saved the Brentham squad this torture. Time was running out, and Hook were pushing men forward in search of an equaliser, and they had their opportunity with four minutes remaining when one of their roadrunners was through one on one with Adrian, fortunately for Brentham he

hit his shot against Adrian's left hand post and the ball went out for a goal kick. With time running out, Neil Graveney was dumped to the ground by a rash challenge from a Hook midfielder, but the Welshman in the Brentham training top and the whistle in his hand, failed to acknowledge any foul. Brentham had several opportunities to clear their lines, but the ball bobbed to the Hook impish midfielder who shot from 20 yards and the ball agonisingly looped over Adrian into the Brentham net. To be fair, it was a good goal, but Brentham had had their chances to clear the danger beforehand. There was only time to kick off before Mick Eames blew his whistle and Brentham were robbed of victory by a Welsh referee who had had a similar game to Clive Thomas when he denied Brazil a perfectly good goal in a World cup many years ago. Although Mick Eames hadn't denied Brentham a goal, as he is Welsh, it is his fault anyway. Brentham continued their good form in the new year, having lost only once as we head to the end of March, however, there are four testing games to come which will require the squad to perform well to continue their fine form.

Fine performances from John Rodgers, Mike Miley and Neil Graveney, and a familiar look to the goal scoring list of Matthews and Duffy. The two teams took to the Hook bar where Brentham ate the home team's sarnies before being presented with their own, and Marky Mark held court outside with six Veterans listening (but not listening) as Marky Mark held a conversation with himself about something or other – probably 19 year old women.

A fine performance from Brentham on a paddy of a field, the only thing missing was the end result.

Final Score: Hook Veterans 2-2 Brentham Veterans.

(Matthews 1, Duffy 1,)

Next game Home v Polytechnic. Sunday March 27th 2011.