

Tunbridge Wells Men's I 4 Burnt Ash 0

A complete performance

The T Wells first team competed in another league defining fixture this weekend against newly promoted Burnt Ash. The dreams of two back to back promotions were kept alive with a performance that coach Turner described as "their most complete performance" to date.

A loss at this stage to high flying Burnt Ash would have made promotion very difficult in a league where one team (Old Bordenians) have not lost a game and the battle for second is only amongst three other teams.

Burnt Ash came out of the blocks with a superb intensity and seemingly unbreakable organisation. They harried the Wells ball carriers and exerted a pressure that the Wells group had not seen yet. But it led to an exceptional response. Judge led that response. And his partners either side of him at the back of the formation followed suit, playing intricate triangular passes around their opposite numbers. At times Wells had to resort to lofted overhead passes from Judge to relieve the pressure.

Ed Norman was influential in his ability to relieve pressure. His ample skill set unlocked water tight pressure and allowed the Wells men (previously known as boys before this fixture) to escape the unrelenting clutches of the Burnt Ash pressure system.

The front line led by Brandt moved well, but were always outnumbered at the final phase and every route into the Burnt Ash goal scoring circle seemed closed.

It wasn't a moment of tactical nous from the coaching side that made the difference, it was a sublime piece of individuality from Matt Flower that broke the Burnt Ash machine. Flower, unselected for the first team in the opening games, made a stand. A triple elimination one after the other down the left flank put him in prime position in front of the Ash goal keeper. Unflustered by the intensity of the moment or the bearing down defence, like a training ground piece of gratuitous skill; he dropped his right shoulder which opened the keepers legs and squeezed the ball through the gap. Finally the score board got moving. 1-0 T Wells.

Half time came and went and the next score would have changed the match and possibly the destiny of these two teams. But Sam Clarke-Knowles plays for Tunbridge Wells, not Burnt Ash... And it was him that shifted the momentum into the power grip of the Wells dreamy clutches. Brandt pulled the ball to the back of the D from a beautiful midfield move and Clarke-Knowles took the ball first time off his back foot and placed it into the bottom right corner of the goal. 2-0.

The mid field then gained their dominance. Transferring the ball and threatening constantly- the Burnt Ash defensive system began to break. It simply ran out of steam. They conceded their first short corner of the game and a tactical substitution from Britton ten seconds earlier meant that specialist short corner striker turner was on the pitch. Christoff injected. Judge stopped. Turner scored. 3-0

Confidence reached new levels, composure remained and supreme discipline crushed the oppo. A second yellow card for Burnt Ash and the Wells midfield ran rampant, Clarke, Shaw, Garwood all wanting the ball. All playing as if they had just stepped on to the pitch. The energy levels were euphoric. And it was that trio of midfield players that set the final move. Clarke-Knowles was found at right wing and within a moment the ball was screaming across the face of the goal- a Chris Barber first time deflection and the game was buried. 4-0 against their toughest opposition to date.

Every one in the league and the next league above are talking about this Tunbridge Wells team. Their dreams of being a hockey power in Kent at the moment remain just as dreams, but with every three points they earn, that dream becomes palpable. HSBC, at the bottom of the league come to Tonbridge School next Saturday for an 11.30 push back.

Kent/Sussex Div 2

			P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1	➔	Old Bordenians 1	6	6	0	0	28	11	17	18
2	➔	Tunbridge Wells 1	6	5	0	1	23	9	14	15
3	➔	Lewes 2	6	4	1	1	22	8	14	13
4	➔	Burnt Ash 1	6	3	2	1	25	11	14	11
5	➔	Crawley 1	6	3	0	3	17	16	1	9
6	➔	Mid-Sussex 1	6	2	2	2	17	11	6	8
7	➔	Canterbury Pilgrims	6	2	1	3	20	19	1	7
8	➔	Blackheath 1	6	2	1	3	17	20	-3	7
9	➔	Canterbury 3	6	1	2	3	14	17	-3	5
10	➔	Holcombe 2a	6	1	1	4	8	28	-20	4
11	➔	Worthing 2	6	1	0	5	3	33	-30	3
12	➔	HSBC 1	6	0	2	4	11	22	-11	2

GRASSHOPPERS 1 BURNT ASH 5

This report kind of mirrors most of them for this season. The only real difference is the name of the opposition. The Meteorological Office predicted, or forecast (which is the more accurate?) that we would have a very wet weekend . We all spent sometime on Friday screwing our longer studs into our boots in anticipation of the heavy conditions. These did not occur, it was a lovely late autumn afternoon, the multi- coloured leaves dappled by the soft sun light.

The pitch was lovingly prepared by our head grounds person, Dave Tankard, the sand which he had used gave us a lovely surface, and we were looking forward to a gritty performance.

We arrived to find that we had been deprived of two players. Martin Athey was reported to have " man flu" and Richard Landolt had " a poorly finger ".

And so we were reduced to 10, but Tom Holme stepped up to the plate (or was that at tea?) to complete our team.

Reverting to the beginning of this masterful report and the reference to the sameness of our display we started well, lots of pressure and then a goal from our left half , Greig Bannerman, converting a pass from Nick Ivory. Greig has dedicated this goal to Roger Fitzwater, who normally plays in this position, but was absent celebrating his 70th birthday, and, presumably, giving one, or several , of his epic speeches.

Thereafter the game took its normal course. They equalised, then netted again, making it 1-2 at the half way point. The oranges were especially delicious, do we have a new fruit merchant or costermonger?

Burnt Ash then took the upper hand and scored three more, a couple with relative ease. Mention must be made, as always, of Jamie Crawford , who pulled off some miraculous saves, a couple in a one on one situation, one diving to his right and turning the ball away with his stick. He should not even have been playing as he had a very sore knee.

Controversy when Neil Ghosley received a yellow card for a very robust challenge on an opponent. Neil is dedicating this to Julian Hastings.

So that was it, still no win this season, and , sadly, we all seemed to run out of enthusiasm towards the end. Honourable mention must be made of the rest of our team, Alec Pelmore, Chris Stebbing, John Burton, Roger Morson, Rory Poulton, Tim Revell, we all did our best.

Other Men's results: 2s beat Ashford 3s 7 – 0, 3s lost 5 – 2 to Marden 3s, Vets lost 5-2 to Folkestone 5,

Sevenoaks IV 0 Wells I 2

Wells came through unscathed in a testing encounter against Sevenoaks 4s. A well drilled Sevenoaks outfit demonstrated the host clubs strength in depth as they set out at a high tempo, not allowing Wells to settle into their normal fluid style and the first half passed as a scrappy affair with Sevenoaks the busier of the two defences.

Looking to take control of the tempo of the match, Wells started the second half looking far more comfortable against a weary looking opposition. Continued pressure on the Sevenoaks circle lead to Holly Baldwin winning Wells a penalty corner that Jen Hunt converted into the bottom left. The 15 minutes that followed saw Wells suffer three injuries that kept the medical staff fully engaged, the walking wounded being patched up and sent back out as Wells struggled to maintain their momentum. While Wells continued to look the better side they were wasteful in front of goal and Sevenoaks did have a couple of chances of their own that Ali Playle did well to keep out. Wells had their customary disallowed goal before a counter attack in the last ten minutes saw Brolley Player of the Match Amanda Tyburski feed Holly Turner outside the left post who fired into the roof of the net to secure Wells' seventh successive win in all competitions.

EAST DIVISION 2SE

Canterbury 3	8	7	1	0	33	7	26	22
Thurrock 1	8	7	0	1	34	6	28	21
Tunbridge Wells 1	8	7	0	1	25	4	21	21
Folkestone 1	8	6	0	2	22	17	5	18
Blackheath 1	8	4	1	3	17	10	7	13
BBHC 1	8	3	1	4	23	16	7	10
Holcombe 2	8	3	1	4	10	24	-14	10
Basildon 1	8	2	1	5	9	20	-11	7
Sevenoaks 4	8	2	1	5	7	25	-18	7
Gore Court 1	8	2	0	6	12	19	-7	6
Brentwood 1	8	1	1	6	5	22	-17	4
Gillingham Anchorians 1	8	0	1	7	0	27	-27	1

Tun Wells Royals 2 Cliftonville 0

It was 2nd place Cliftonville against 4th place Royals in this top of the table clash in the Kent Premier league on Saturday with Royals oozing confidence after two straight wins. Royals started brightly not letting Cliftonville into the game at all and Carolyn Pollard again ran the midfield with Jess Foster regaining top form bringing a calmness to the team. Several chances were created with Raisa Rampersad working hard to gain possession in the circle and Fran Hawkins making several runs down the right but no one seemed to be able to latch onto the final pass. The busiest player on the pitch was Cliftonville keeper and with 10 minutes to go before half time an injury to Maddie Godfrey led to sub Lisa Boldrini entering the fray and poaching a goal at the near post after great work again by Hawkins and then following a short corner Boldrini again pounced on a loose ball and sent the ball high into the roof of the net. 2-0 at half time and Royals were keen to shut up shop and hit Cliftonville on the break. Several more chances were created but earlier passing was needed and the score stayed at 2-0. A Royals penalty flick hit the post late on but fortunately did not affect the result.

The Royals defence again played well as a unit and managed a third clean sheet in a row. Royals leap frog Cliftonville and go 3rd and look forward to Marden Russetts who are level on points with them in the league this weekend.

Tunbridge Wells Ladies III 1 Meopham I 1

In a rather scrappy game Wells came away feeling a draw was a fair result. Wells found it difficult to play their usual passing game and Meopham played in a determined fashion which caught the Wells youngsters off guard. Wells scored their goal in the first half, poked home by Sarah McClelland with the help of a Meopham foot to ensure it went over the line! The second half saw Wells working hard with man of the match Laura Blaxland making some penetrating runs up the left. But Wells failed to capitalise on their goal cushion and Meopham scored from a well struck short corner.

Tunbridge Wells Ladies V 0 Remnants II 0

Wells had put a huge effort into getting together a team. The last pieces apparently in place when Blackheath cancelled. However, even en route, a final player was summoned to fill an unexpected hole. Thus, Wells spent another half of hockey playing with ten. Attacks were scarce, but Olivia Lay patrolled the front seeking space while Sarai Howkins was usually occupied in defence. Wells managed several breaks lead by Tess McClelland and Amy Stables, but the defence were given plenty to do with goalie Megan Grist called upon to make several good saves. Lorna Akers Douglas was in fine hitting form from the back ably abetted by Krishna Shah and Katy Fraser breaking up the attacks.

A draw was probably a fair result to a game played in fine spirit.

Tunbridge Wells Girls U12

TW sent 4 balanced U12 teams to Canterbury and Marden last weekend – giving 40 girls the opportunity to shine. And shine they did putting in some fantastic performances.

While the results were very good more importantly so was the level of performance. All TW teams showed great ambition to try and put passes together and to get the ball away from pressure and into space.

Indeed at Marden I saw a centre back clear the ball square and wide right from a 16 to her right half. The ball was then passed down the line to the right wing who attacked the Marden D. When challenged she looked for a pass and found her right half behind her in the opponents half..

The ball was then played square to the centre back who had also ventured forward and she then found a forward in the circle.

It was the high spot of many such plays all day.

We are getting shape to our game and slowly identifying individual's strengths. No longer are our defenders happy to stay back, but they join in supporting over the whole pitch. Pip Ross exemplified this and was Player of the tournament at Marden.

It seems churlish to criticise our shooting when more than 20 goals are scored but there is plenty of scope to improve in front of goal. Sophie at Canterbury deserves a mention for scoring 6 well hit goals and being player of that tournament.

It is worth making the point that our teams that had a goalkeeper (Lauren at Canterbury & Alice at Marden) did not let in any goals and this is the key to their team's table topping performances. Goalkeepers win matches and we will be offering opportunities over the weeks ahead to find new match winners.

It was great to see some of our newer players getting involved and showing great commitment. Indeed the energy in all of the teams was high and this allowed us to close down opponents early forcing errors. There are still times when we panic and just shovel the ball forward, and there is room to practice our passing (both players must look at each other, and the pass must be firm). But there was much to be proud of at both venues and the coaches were very pleased with all of their players.

T Wells U14 B1 7 Sevenoaks 0

(A Smith 2, M Fenton 3, A O'Connell 2)

In only their third match at the eleven a side format, Wells recorded their first emphatic victory in the Kent Girls U14 League. The squad comprises of U13 girls who have moved up to the U14 level and are in the process of building up experience at this higher level.

After a well earned draw against Marden the previous week the squad was strengthened with the return of Alice O'Connell at centre mid who demonstrated strong core skills particularly tackling back and ball distribution. Initial penetrative attacks from Sevenoaks were broken up by Wells followed by a swift counterattack ending in a well taken goal by Anna Smith. A second goal followed by a period of prolonged attack which was notable from some strong keeping by the Sevenoaks keeper, it could not last with the Wells second goal with a strike from Mhairi Fenton which was deflected in by a Sevenoaks defender.

The second half resumed with ever more pressure from Wells with some well made passing patterns down both wings which resulted in a mix of both good and bad final balls into the Sevenoaks circle. Wells scored five further goals in open play through a number of well taken strikes preceded by penetrative dribbling or penetrative passes from midfield. One particularly noteworthy goal scored by Mhairi Fenton from a lovely through ball which was chipped by her into the top corner of the goal leaving the keeper no chance - a goal many senior club players would be proud of.

Towards the end of the game Sevenoaks showed some great resolve and pride and made some strong attacks as Wells ran out of steam but unfortunately for Sevenoaks they could not make the pressure count in the end.