

Tunbridge Wells Mens I 4 Kings Alleyns I 1.

A cold day and the first game not only of 2010, but also for some time with the weather cancelling fixtures. Would we see some rust on fitness and concentration levels? Frankly, not much. Although the start of the game saw some even contests for domination of the midfield – a period in which TW conceded a goal from open play in the 6th minute – the team soon settled into a passing rhythm that allowed the possession always to find comfort from play out of deep defence.

As soon as all players could see and feel that movement out of defence was the key, it freed up movement off the ball and sometimes very innovative play in the middle and up front.

TW did not have the half all their own way, by any means and a succession of PCs after several break outs might have been converted. TW managing only 1 PC in the first half. Gav Rimmer in goal barely put a foot wrong (all game). The half time tactical talk from Coach Turner put a completely different complexion on a second half that produced a wholly different story. TW conceded 1 PC in the 2nd half, whilst securing 6 for themselves.

Immediate pressure brought about a PC which was neatly converted by Ed Norman, equalising in the 4th minute. The ball only really came back into the TW half by design of the midfield and full backs in order to reset. Swinging the ball to left and right, probing the opposition for failing to follow suit. It was not long therefore that another attack produced a shot on target that looped over the keeper only to illegally parried over head height from going in. The Penalty Flick was converted by Jamie Knight on the 12th minute. No yellow card was given, but frankly that mattered little as TW swept up and across the pitch, again and again exploring where to put the final attack. Every player during this period really distinguished their understanding of the strength of leading the ball into the opposition just short of contact, pulling out and moving the ball into a team mate in space. Consequently, TW made much of their possession which at times ran to many, many passing movements.

If the play did break down and possession given away, the dependable defensive work of skipper Harfoot (leading from a new position in deep defence) or Newington picked off attackers seemingly at will. Movement through the backs of Powis, Hart and Pengelly, onto Ed Norman and Tom Clarke-Knowles and all hinged through Jamie Knight. The ball was fired up to a very agile and energetic forward line, with Sam Clarke-Knowles and Ben Lang, whilst Callum Wood and Billy Priestley piled on the pressure way up front. Not 10 minutes passed before another free flowing open play move was impressively chipped in by Callum Wood. 3-1 up after the 21st minute of the second half. The game was TWs. The opposition had been ground down and the visiting TW supporters had the pleasure of seeing a 4th goal added on the half hour by Knight during a particularly pleasing PC move.

The success was complete – all hinging on the willingness to move from strength, from the back and build up with precision passing. For his accuracy with both tackle and the pass, coupled with infectious patience, MoM Jamie Harfoot.

Tunbridge Wells Vets II 3 Canterbury 6

The Mysterious Game

A murky, damp half-light, a skipper missing in action, a blur of green and white – what hope the rudderless ship?

Across the ether came news that the nocturnal external search technique perfected at three rock rovers had claimed its latest victim, the SOS relayed 8 miles, but the spinning compass could not pinpoint the swash or the buckle.

Digweed stood alone on the burning deck on no less than 6 occasions, as lightning strikes and booming cannon rent the gloom asunder. Admiral Mayes, Commander Burton, with jack-tars Akery and Holloway provided stout resistance as the marauders swamped the decks. Amidships, the powder was ceaselessly primed by Lieutenants Jago and MacNamara, whilst pegleg Goodwin linked with the swarming strikers. Their radar was seriously AWOL – haphazard at best, Shearer's ratio no more than 2 out of 10, Barnes 1 out of 4, and Harrison landing not one blade to the opponents nets.

After the heat of battle, victor, vanquished, and ghost gathered to contemplate what might have been, and to speculate whether the wandering albatross would make landfall before the next skirmish.

Other Mens result: 2nd 0 Alleyns 2

Tunbridge Wells Ladies 4th XI 6 Gravesend 4th XI 0

After a long break in the league over Christmas, Wells returned to the prospect of a wet cold away fixture versus Gravesend. However this did not deter them and they quickly showed the excellent form that they had established as a team in the first half of the season. Wells dominated from the beginning and played as a team providing the midfield and forwards plenty of opportunities to put the opposition's goalkeeper under pressure. Saskia Booth provided consistency in defence and several strong runs forward provided further opportunities for the team to add to their total.

Lily Loveland produced some good tackling at left back clearing the ball to Tess McClelland who made good progress up towards the left wing. Five goals were achieved during the flow of play with just one coming from a short corner struck by Sarah Martins and finished off by Claire Bowler. Great individual play by Claire was rewarded with a hat-trick of goals and the well deserved title of player of the match voted unanimously by the rest of the team!

Saturday's result secures Wells position as one of the top three teams in Kent division five and they look forward to pushing for promotion this season.

Team: Chris Poth, Jennie Bowler, Saskia Booth, Lily Loveland, Jess Garraway, Martine Atkinson, Hannah Humphrey Baker, Tess McClelland, Emma Goff, Sarah Martins, Lucy Woodward, Sarai Howkins and Claire Bowler

Other Ladies result: 2's 0 Blackheath I 2

Tunbridge Wells Boys Under 14 A 3v Ashford 2

After a late start the team missed several early chances and were a little confused by the Ashford goal hanging technique of their centre forward but Oli Kemp managed to score a goal prior to half time. The post xmas and recent snow fatigue then hit demonstrating a general lack of fitness and exhaustion began to set in. The "reaction" was poor and the midfielders in particular lacked energy to tackle back and help out the defenders. James Meddings managed to score early in the second half but then a break by Ashford made the score 2-1. Tom Shields then stuck to his position allowing the team to use the right side of the pitch which stretched the opposition defence allowing James Meddings to score for a second time. Ashford then rallied with a huge effort towards the end of the game bringing the score to 3-2. Wells were lucky to hold onto the lead and the whole team was relieved when the final whistle blew. Well done to the whole team for a narrow win in our new league but I fear the opposition will just get stronger and we need to work on our fitness and stick to our positions

U10 Tournament

Wells won all of their games, with the last game Sue Tapp's Snow beating Guy Shaw's Grit 2-1 with a last minute goal.

There was some excellent hockey played with great willingness to pass the ball mainly to a TW player.

There is a greater need at times to anticipate rather than react, but a big improvement on all that has gone on before.

Wells energy was superior to our competitors and confidence increased with each outing. Although we did not do much defending, there is still a tendency to run with the opposition (or away from) rather than to make tackles / close down.

Goals were many and while it would be wrong to single out any one name Oliver Phillips and Thomas Mobbs led the tally.

Toby Tapp and Kyle Mathieson probably touched the ball most and controlled play, ably supported by Catherine Heasman, Louisa Richardson, Olivia Jenner and Alfie Leek.

Josh Lord made the pass of the day looking to switch play left to right via someone behind him.

Defensively Emelia Hollingsworth, Fran Tute and Beth Shaw made sure that while the others pushed forward there would be no breakaway goal.

Well done all