

## Tunbridge Wells Mens I 4 Kings and Alleyns I 2

A resurgent first eleven side took to the pitch at Hawkenbury looking to kick start this season's campaign in style against a Kings and Alleyns side that had put both five and seven goals past them without reply in the two corresponding fixtures of Wells 'annus horribilis' last year.

With a strong mixture of returning faces and league debutantes, Wells strode onto the pitch confident of surprising a Kings side whose day had already started on the wrong foot due to unforeseen complications with their 'reputable' coach supplier.

From the whistle Wells started by far the stronger side, moving the ball quickly and confidently throughout the team, and giving Kings little opportunity to break down play and establish themselves in the game. Before long Wells had tested the Kings keeper for the first time, Alex Rout taking full advantage of the newly introduced self-pass rule, finding space to get a shot off, but that the keeper saved comfortably. Wells continued pressure was to pay off soon after however, as Rout rifled a reverse stick shot high and wide of the flailing Kings goalkeeper to put the home side one up.

In a moment eerily resembling the side of old however, Wells allowed Kings to counter immediately from the restart, and with some absent minded marking Kings were able to scramble the ball in to equalise no more than a minute later. Wells immediately showed their new found resolve, and continued to control the game from their re-start, and further pressure soon found right back Chris Wilson free in the D, shooting whilst felled from behind to find the bottom left hand corner of the net as the umpires whistle blew. Cruelly denied a clear advantage Rout drag-flicked the subsequent corner into the side netting to restore Wells lead.

As half-time approached Kings began to establish their rhythm, and pushed forward in search of an equaliser. The Wells defence of Wilson, Newington, Pelmore and Fox dealt with all ensuing attacks comfortably, until minutes before half-time a speculatively lashed ball across the circle was met by a free man, his deflection leaving keeper Rimmer helpless to keep the ball out. The game left delicately poised at half-time, two each.

The second half started with both sides eager to put their stamp on the game and gain the lead. Kings pushed further forward, but any attacks were quickly snuffed out by Wells' defence. Wells stuck to their patterns, with Jamies' Harfoot and Knight orchestrating the midfield, and allowing Priestley, Ashby and Rout the opportunity to press the opposition circle.

Looking to take advantage of an attacking Wells, Kings committed players further forward, and after a failed attack Wells capitalized quickly, moving the ball out of defence and into midfield, Rout threading a long pass through to the solitary Billy Priestley who had created room for himself up front. Charged by the Kings keeper Priestley moved the ball away but could not avoid contact, the umpire signalling for a penalty stroke that Jamie Knight duly dispatched past the inexperienced and somewhat unconventional goalkeeper.

Chasing a draw for the third time in the game, Kings upped their tempo once again, firing balls into the circle, and forcing Rimmer to make a number of strong saves. Acknowledging the pressure Wells sat back to contain, and a counter-attack found Ashby free at the top of the circle. After a subtle dummy he fired a shot that the keeper could only pad away to Sam Clarke-Knowles, who calmly netted the rebound for his first goal for the first eleven.

With Kings unable to respond Wells slowed the pace of the game, and controlled the remaining minutes to take an altogether comfortable victory on the opening day of the season. Wells hope to continue their good form away at Canterbury next week, against the largely unknown Canterbury Pilgrims, who joined the league in the recent restructure.

Squad : Harfoot (c), Rimmer (gk) Fox, Pelmore, Newington, Wilson, Norman, Knight, Rout, Priestley, Ashby, Clarke-Knowles S, Clarke-Knowles T

## Tunbridge Wells Mens II 3 Kings & Alleyns II 3

Wells started their league season with a well-fought draw. Wells went ahead late in the first half through Calum Wood. Fighting back there was time for the opposition to earn a penalty flick but they were not able to convert.

In the second half, with fifteen minutes to go Alleyns' pressure told and they equalised. The remainder of the game was played at a frenetic pace. Alleyns slotted home the lead only for Tunbridge Wells to score twice through Duncan Fiskin and Sam Begg late on to retake the lead. With the last take of the game Alleyns equalised to make the score 3-3. A great game for Tunbridge Wells, who bar a 15 minute period in the second half played well. A special mention for Goalkeeper Scott Crawford who played with aplomb

#### Tunbridge Wells Mens IV 2 Herne Bay IV 2

Wells travelled to the windswept east coast for their first league game of the season. Herne Bay put pressure on the Wells defence from the start creating a number of scoring opportunities but were unable to convert them thanks to the solid goal keeping of Brandon Begg and resolute defence of Charlie Nyren and Stephen Tagg. Wells counter-attacked with Saeed Malik square passing out to Nick Pelham who then set up a shot for Elliott McCarthy. Herne Bay's keeper kicked the ball into the legs of McCarthy and with the umpire playing advantage, McCarthy drilled the ball in the back of the net.

At Half Time, Nyren explained the next goal was key, if Wells scored they would win the match. Into the second half and Herne Bay had the chance at a short corner to level the score and duly slotted the ball into the goal. Wells responded positively to the set-back and started to play their best hockey of the game with good passing from the midfield halves Aaron Leadbeater and Sam Spence. Once again Wells counter attacked with Malik winning a short corner at which Nyren slipped the ball to Sam Mario Kemp who squeezed the ball home in between the goalkeeper and post. A further short short corner for Herne Bay was converted with a strike wide across the goal to leave the game to end in a draw.

#### Tunbridge Wells Grasshoppers 5 Canterbury Friars 2

Yet again the Grasshoppers were denied their natural habitat, grass, but coped with the conditions well. Mark Barker was in sparkling form on the right wing. He roasted the opposition left defence at every opportunity and scored 4 goals. He had a role in the remaining goal, putting in Greig Bannerman to score from close range. The Hoppers controlled the midfield and moved the ball around well. However, Canterbury did create chances despite the return of captain, John Burton at sweeper. Jamie Crawford in goal came to the rescue with some good saves allowing Canterbury only to score twice. The scoreline did not flatter the Hoppers, who wasted several chances.

#### U16 Girls England Hockey Knockout Result Tunbridge Wells 4 Havering 2

With our first game in this seasons knockout competition against Havering, who were last years winners of the EH Plate competition, this was always going to be a tough task which needed a full strength side from whistle to whistle. Thankfully the girls turned up ready for the challenge. We had a full complement of players but no subs so everyone had to give their all. The team gelled well together considering that this is very early on in the season. Our understanding and adaptation of the new rules is improving all the time, however we can still work on our general fitness levels. Hockey is a team game and as such everyone needs to be there for each other. Not being in possession of the ball doesn't mean you aren't in the game! Think drawing a defender, making space, running into space etc. We went into half-time with the score line 3-1, Becky Lennon scoring two goals and Lily Elliot getting one. After half time Havering came back strongly for 15 minutes, they scored another to make it 3-2 but our determination held them off. Some very quick covering needed at times in our defence. Cracking goal from Lucy Lawson clinched it 4-2. Overall a very exciting game to watch, (not sure the coach is ready for such stress this early on in the season!), well worked short-corners and impressive play mid-field when Wells were controlling the

game. Well done girls a great game of hockey. Captain, Boo Tooze, MOM was Lily Elliott, tireless in defence and great distribution mid-field.

### Tunbridge Wells Ladies II 1 Blackheath I 2

A better start from Wells this week, soaking up some early pressure from Blackheath's well-drilled forwards. Unfortunately a strike from their centre forward beat the Wells keeper on her right –hand post.

Going into the second half Wells were determined to turn the game around in their favour – some good play between Rachel Fox and Emily Buckland led to the best chance of the game – the Blackheath keeper their lead intact. However, some bad defending by Wells led to a melee in front of the Wells keeper -2-0 down

Still not outdone, Wells came back late in the second half, a short corner resulting in a goal by Liz Joseph.

Fox's tireless efforts up front earned her player of the match. Wells travel to Upminster next week full of hope after a better performance.

### Tunbridge Wells Ladies I 1 Letchworth I 1

It was a slim-line Tunbridge Wells side that headed up the A1(m) to Letchworth on Saturday with just 11 players available. With no subs and a tough game in prospect, Wells knew they had to give 100 per cent from the start.

New player Kat Downes was drafted in to centre midfield and Jess Foster played in a new position for her as a front sweeper so it was Letchworth who took control in the early stages as Tunbridge Wells took time to settle.

It was a nervy start from Wells and usually sharp first touches were absent for the first 20 minutes. But while the defence soaked up wave after wave of attacks from Letchworth, Downes, Foster and Lucy Turner began to work well together in the centre and were tenacious in their tackling, helping to break down many a dangerous attack.

At the other end lateral movement up front, particularly from player-of-the-match Harriet Alexander and Jen Hunt, meant that when Wells did push forward they also looked dangerous.

Tanya Minns joined the attack this week and caused problems for Letchworth with her pace.

In a busy defensive game it was inevitable that Letchworth would break the seal eventually and this they did mid-way through the first half.

However, in true Tunbridge Wells style heads did not go down and Hunt made it level with a great shot from an acute angle after good work from Minns.

It was a simple team talk from coach Martin Rohan that sent Wells out in the second half determined to get something from this game.

Great keeping from Ali Playle and tight defending from Ele Gee, Hannah Turner and Lisa Fiddimore meant that Letchworth were frustrated throughout the second half.

In fact it was Tunbridge Wells who could have snatched a victory from this game, with a flick not awarded to Minns and an awesome save on the line from a Harriet Alexander strike late in the half.

Wells' tenacity and sheer work rate in this game meant they took a well-earned point from this game and lie fourth in the table at the early stages of the season.

### Tunbridge Wells Ladies III 1 Maidstone III 0

Wells started strongly dominating possession from the off. Good attacking play down both wings created several chances which were either saved by an in form keeper or scrambled away by the defence. An excellent cross from Tracey Boorman was met by player of the match Uschi Moore who slapped the ball into the net for what should have been the first of many. Unfortunately, despite constant pressure

throughout the remainder of the match and myriad chances Wells failed to convert and the final score of 1 - 0 did not reflect Wells dominance.

#### Tunbridge Wells Ladies V 2 Tunbridge Wells Ladies IV 2

This was the first time a league match had been played between two Wells teams and both teams put out recognisably strong sides despite poor availability higher up the club. From the start it was an open game with attacks coming from both sides. The 4's opened the scoring when Saria Howkins was allowed to sneak towards the goal and fire in against her erstwhile team-mates. The 5's reply came early in the second half when, after a flurry of attacking in which 4's Suzie Dennis made a series of saves, Elisabeth Floyd pushed the ball over the line.

The 4's upped their game and defence players Sam Barker and Lorna Akers- Douglas made a series of timely interventions. However, their rearguard actions could not prevent the 4's retaking the lead when Sarah McClelland touched in a shot from Emma Goff. The 4's put together several neat passing passages using Martine Atkinson, Jess Garraway and juniors Hayley Dann and Xanthe Stebbing.. In the last quarter, Linda Davies on the right wing was able to receive some passes and show her speed. The game was into its last 2 minutes when she raced down the pitch from a pass by Lucy Woodward. Her cross was intercepted in the circle, but the clearance resulted in a free-hit for the 5's just outside the D. Showing quick thinking, Woodward self-passed and broke into the circle. Her shot fell to Davies on the right. With time running out, Davies hit across the circle and Sarah Martins glided in to knock the ball inside the far post. Delight for the 5's, despair for the 4's. The opposing centre mids, Emma Goff and Lucy Woodward were the players of the match.

Results: Tunbridge Wells Vintage 3 Sevenoaks 4, Mens III 0 Anchorians 5