

Please note: There are photos being put up on Fixtures Live. Look on team page for Mens 1, Vintage (not Grasshoppers) and Mixed. Email holmerichard@aol.com if you need help finding them

Tunbridge Wells Mens I 3 South Saxons I 0

Tunbridge Wells Men's first team travelled to neutral ground at East Grinstead to play in the Kent and Sussex League play off match for promotion with South Saxons Men's first team. Over the course of the season, when it has mattered, the Tunbridge Wells 1st 11 have delivered. Not every week did they have the full compliment of available players and unfortunately for this promotion match, James Harfoot, Sam Clarke-Knowles, Tim Barber, Ben Backx and Pete Hill were not able to play. Yet the Wells first team did not forget their contribution to getting the team into the position to play off for promotion into the Kent and Sussex League for next season.

Coach Turner knew that he had the fastest, fittest team and was determined to set a pace that the South Saxons team would struggle with. From the first whistle Wells pressed Saxons as a team. The opening 12 minutes was a furious blend of attacking hockey on the ball, and aggressive high pressing off the ball. And inevitably the Saxons team cracked. Another dispossession in high mid field for the Wells boys and suddenly Norman was carrying the ball where he hurts the opposition most. A double elimination entering the D and a snappy release had the keeper beaten. Fyson went to deflect in to make sure but got too much of the ball and diverted the shot wide. But such was the attaching presence of the front 5 there were numbers in the D and Chris Barber slid in at the far post to put Wells up 1-0. The crowd and players leapt immediately as they knew that they had first blood.

The goal buoyed the Wells team and with fast rotating substitutions the pace remained high. The back four of Siggery, Pelmore, Hart and Barnaby set an impenetrable foundation for the midfield to work off, and whenever Saxons stepped forward, their front two were easily snuffed out by a resolute back line. Norman, and Tom Clark-Knowles made the most of the versatile surface and carried the ball dangerously and were a constant threat; the Wells front line were never short of ball. Interchanging lead runs and dynamic movement meant that it was a forward's dream and Brandt, Chris Barber, Fyson, Woodcock, and Mike Pelmore were creating huge problems up front as they sacrificed pitch time for massive short bursts of energy.

David Hemsley, sat in the centre of midfield for the duration of the game. David was an education for the opposition and his team mates. He constantly stepped in front of his opposite number to steal the ball, and spent the entire game spreading the attack to where on the pitch he could see the most space. And it was his understudies that used that space. The onslaught continued and Tunbridge Wells dominated possession and territory. Before long a short corner was won through another attack and within 60 seconds of the corner being awarded, Chris Pelmore was trotting back to the half way line after drag flicking the ball high past the keepers left side into the side netting. 2-0 up.

Half time finished with a flurry and the score board could have grown more... But only one sneaked past the Saxons keeper with a Fyson strike and the score at half time was a 3-0 lead to Wells.

Confidence levels were high as the team listened into Turner's half time talk. But confidence turned into complacency and the opening 7 minutes saw a scrappy start as South Saxons moved up a gear. 3 simultaneous substitutions immediately followed with instructions from the side to regain control of the tempo, and the threesome of James Barber, Mike Pelmore and Adam Woodcock did exactly that. After a shaky restart, control came back to the Wells outfit and the game was back in control. Fortunately for Wells, Captain Gavin Rimmer was up for the fight and the brief purple patch from Saxons was dismissed with some fine goal keeping. For the remainder of the second half, chances came and went, but none converted. Rimmer, determined not to put a blotch on his last memories of the season kept his sheet clean even when the boys in red went down to 10 men after an over enthusiastic Fyson diving tackle.

The final whistle blew. Mission accomplished. Tunbridge Wells play in the Kent and Sussex league division 2 next season and already the talk around the club is of back to back promotions.

Grasshoppers Tournament

John's Version

Saturday 9th April – glorious sunshine and the Grasshoppers Tournament at the Nevill...ON THE SAME DAY. This was a welcome coincidence that has not been enjoyed for a few years: last year was rained off earlier in the week; the previous two years were blighted by rain so bad that each time one team assumed it must be rained off and did not travel. It has even been played in snow, sleet and hail.

So, the conditions were great, the ground was 'a picture' as they say, all the teams arrived: what about the hockey, was that up to a similar standard? Truth to tell most teams were off to a slow start with promising moves breaking down as a receiver missed the ball or trod on it – or because the pass was misdirected. Gradually the defences were called on to do more as the attackers warmed to their tasks, and the standard continued to rise as the day went on.

Tunbridge Wells Grasshoppers began with two 0-0 draws against Sutton Valence and Canterbury, teams that were to finish at the wrong end of the table, and so made it unlikely that they would top the table and win their own tournament.

Kenley hustled hard, but two early goals gave Grasshoppers a lead that they did not surrender, leaving them still to play the last two winners, Purley and Epsom. Win both games and they might just win the tournament. A good game against Purley yielded a 2-2 draw, so Grasshoppers could no longer win without upsets in other games, but they could still decide the outcome.

Epsom needed at least a score draw and two points from the Hoppers last game, otherwise Purley would win. They began the game with a clear determination to sweep Hoppers aside, and some fierce shots on goal that stung Crawford through his protective padding. Once they were a goal up their passion subsided a little, and Grasshoppers came back into it drawing level at 1-1. Both sides had more chances and even in the closing seconds a through ball found the Hoppers left winger unmarked in the circle, but he rushed his shot and the chance was gone.

So Epsom had the points they needed to win, Purley came second and Grasshoppers third. Everyone enjoyed a great day out, thanks not only to the weather, but to those who gave their time and energy to preparing and running the day in the kitchen and the bar, and to umpiring, and also the spirit in which the games were played.

Greig's Version

The Tunbridge Wells Grasshoppers played their traditional Easter tournament last Saturday.

Due to some mystical forces it was not Easter, but by the time Easter does arrive our ground, the splendid Nevill, will have been handed over to the cricketers, possibly synergetic, as they are probably our close relatives.

Last Saturday dawned a perfect day, not a cloud in the sky, warm and no sign of the plague of locusts promised by Michael Fish.

We had five guest teams. Epsom, Purley, Canterbury, Sutton Valence and Kenley.

Grasshoppers first match was against Sutton Valence and it was a nil all draw(as most nil alls are).

The day progressed with every team playing all the others , 5 x 20 minute matches each.

Not many goals were scored, we managed four in all, Tankard 2, Ivory and Ghostley.

A splendid lunch was provided and we thank Mesdames Cackett, Ivory, Morson, Landolt and Ghostley for serving and clearing up.

Thanks also to David Tankard for the excellent pitches, although he was observed removing a huge divot with his stick.

More games, then tea and the presentations.

Epsom took the Grasshopper Trophy, Purley were runners up.

Then a few beers and home. A good time was had by all.

Tunbridge Wells Mixed Tournament

The impetus for this tournament came from the cancellation, through snow, of the traditional Boxing Day event. The April weather could not have been in greater contrast as eight seven-a-side teams gathered wearing the Brolley-sponsored tee shirts.

The hard grass pitch was not quite the leveller it might have been in the winter and there were signs of quality from the first team players. The male variants, having won their play-off and celebrated the night before, must have found a 10 a.m. meet something of a challenge.

Each team played three matches in the group stage, with the top two in each having to play semis, post-barbeque. The Greys and the Royals beat the Pale Blues and Golds, respectively to reach the final. The final was a little one-sided, possibly reflecting the male/female balance. The Greys came out on top 4-1, but the Royals goal, finished by Jen Hunt, was probably the pick of the scoring.

Boys U14

On a fabulous Sunday the Tunbridge Wells U14 boys competed in the South Regional Championships.

Brom Becks were the first opponents, a team TW have not beaten in recent memory. The game started at a quick pace with both teams threatening to score. Robby Pyne, the Tunbridge Wells goal keeper, made a couple of fine saves that would be repeated throughout the day. Tunbridge Wells midfielders, Marcus O'Riordan, Sam George and Robby Britton started to win the battle and create chances for the hard working forwards Will Brooks, Stan Wisby and Matty Barker. A few fine saves by Brom Becks kept the scores level until centre forward Oli Yeoman provided a clinical finish, putting TW ahead.

The second half started with the same display of skills, Brom Becks pushing hard for an equalizer. Controlling the defence, Oli Woodcock won a tackle, and with an incisive counter attack the ball was smashed home Oli Yeoman. TW 2-0 up. A third goal finished off a very good performance.

The second game was against Woking, a victory would secure a place in the Regional finals. Woking attacked from the beginning and were quickly 1-0 up.

This was the catalyst TW needed to and were soon 2-1 up after 2 superb goals by Will Brooks. Woking, were a strong side and the Wells defense Rory Walton, James Baranaby and Will Bench were called into action and defended brilliantly. Woking continued the attack and despite an incredible effort by everyone won 5-2.

The Tunbridge Wells U14 boys team have had a fantastic season. Their only other defeat was to Canterbury who were crowned overall Champions.

