

15) TWTD Issue 69, Nov 2003: "Protracted encounter with rivals Orford"

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Malcolm Baggio has sucked all of the Raydon milkshake up through his special news-straw and is hear to belch a whole load of Ramblings back up in your face.

The allocation of squad numbers prior to the start of the season proved a surprisingly problematic task for Raydon manager Roland Peters. Peters called the players to Clockton Park for the traditional squad-number-announcement party. All the players were enjoying their fourth or fifth beer when Peters took to the table-cum-stage to announce the numbers. As soon as he announced, "number one, Ian Buffalo", Jason Gooseflesh stormed to the front to remonstrate with Peters. Following his dramatic loss in weight over the summer, Gooseflesh hopes to reclaim the net-overseer spot at Clockton Park and was clearly upset that his counterpart had been allocated number one. A heated 40-minute argument followed in which a frantic Gooseflesh worked himself into such a tearsome frenzy that he started to hyperventilate and an ambulance had to be called to administer oxygen.

With Ian Buffalo reluctant to give up the number one jersey, a compromise was eventually reached. Ian Buffalo was allocated "1" and Jason Gooseflesh was allocated "1a".

There were further problems at Clockton Park during the pre-season. The club hired a local builder to demolish the existing changing shed and replace them with a new changing room and bar complex. However, the building company went out of business after just one day of work during which time they had only got as far as destroying the old structure. Multi-millionaire chariman Lionel Stubbs had unwisely exhausted club funds to pay the builders up front, so there was no money available to recruit an alternative builder. Therefore, the club have acquired two red-and-white striped road-workers tents for use as makeshift changing facilities. Many thanks to midfielder Mansley Kilkorkey who made a special late-night trip to steal them from a roadwork site in Saffron Waldon.

Raydon have started the season well, winning their opening 5 games, scoring 27 goals and conceding one. Ian Buffalo has continued effectively in the role of ball-blocker, with Gooseflesh having to sit out on the sidelines. It remains to be seen whether Goosflesh's exclusion from the team will be the catalyst to him becoming an obese pig again. Raydon's key match during the opening stages of the season was against long standing championship rivals, Orford Castlers at Clockton Park. The kick-off to the match was delayed by 90 minutes when referee, Godfrey Shanks lost one of his contact lenses. Shanks had all the players from both teams including substitutes on their hands and knees scouring the pitch in search of the missing lens. The game was finally able to commence when Shanks discovered that the lens had simply slipped to the back of his eye and he duly repositioned it.

The 90-minute delay caused a problem as it was a midweek evening kick off and the match didn't get underway until 8.45pm. Lionel Stubbs's ambitious floodlight installation scheme of the mid-nineties had unfortunately reached no further than erecting a couple of rickety old telegraph poles with torches gaffer-taped to them either side of the pitch. The first half was a closely fought contest with both teams defending solidly, cancelling each other out. As half time drew near, the light was becoming particularly poor and players were dribbling the ball out of play without realising. However, Raydon managed to fashion a goal when Funtingdale's aimless hoof from the half-line sailed into the back of the net with the keeper unable to see the ball as it flew past his head. The half-time whistle was blown shortly afterwards with the referee deciding to call a halt to the game in view of the poor light. He spoke to both managers and an agreement was reached whereby they would reconvene the following evening to play the second half of the game.

The teams kicked off the second half as planned and Raydon quickly went further ahead with Dougie McManahammond rocketing home a smashing 50 yard drive which ricocheted between the goalposts 7 times before finally crossing the line and nestling in the back of the net like a small fluffy kitten cuddling up inside a large, soft duvet.

With twenty minutes remaining the game had to be stopped again following the invasion of a large swarm of wasps. The swarm took a particular shine to Raydon defender Jack Crankleshank who received 17 painful stings to his buttocks. The wasps proved persistent so the referee again came to an agreement with the managers that they could play out the remaining twenty minutes the next evening. Following the extermination of the wasps, the teams arrived at the ground the next day to find that there was a cricket match taking place meaning they would have to wait until the following day. When the teams finally kicked off the last twenty minutes, Orford battled their way back into the contest thanks to a rare goalkeeping error by Raydon's Ian Buffalo. Buffalo, who has a false left arm, rose to gather a cross from the right but as he caught the ball, his false arm became detached. The ball fell to the feet of the opposing striker who tapped home from close range.

With ten minutes remaining Orford clearly sensed that they could carve something out of the game as they battled forward in search of an equaliser. Raydon had to defend desperately with Crankleshank and Chippaway both making desperate last-ditch tackles to deny the Orford strikers. It looked like Raydon had withstood the Orford onslaught until 30 seconds from the end when Raydon defender Andy Slipper bundled an Orford midfielder to the ground inside the area as he tried to head clear a corner. The referee had no hesitation in pointing to the penalty spot, much to the elation of the Orford players who cheered emphatically and embraced each other.

Raydon's Andy Slipper blasted the ball at the Godfrey Shanks, the referee, in frustration. The ball struck Shanks on the rectum and he fell to the ground in agony, grasping his buttocks. Raydon physio Lionel Stubbs rushed to Shanks's attention and found that the impact of the ball had aggravated his piles. Although Stubbs had no surgical gloves, a quick thinking Roland Peters rushed to the local pub, returning minutes later with a packet of condoms. Stubbs rolled a condom over each hand and duly set about applying Anusol to Shanks's tattered hindquarters. Shanks however was barely conscious, such was the intensity of his rectal pain. The two teams agreed that the match would again have to be postponed and they would arrange to reconvene at a future date to play the remaining 30 seconds of

the match. Stubbs placed the condoms in his physio bag, including the ones he had just used, and drove the referee home.

The next available date was three weeks later. The Orford team made the 30-mile trip to Raydon for the sixth time. Godfrey Shanks had recovered from his piles and was fit to take the whistle. Andy Slipper was particularly disappointed as he made the 120-mile trip from his home in Surrey only for the referee to start proceedings by sending him off for striking the ball at him. A furious Slipper again blasted the ball at the referee but this time, Raydon's keeper Ian Buffalo was standing close by and he managed to dive and tip the ball wide of the referee's anus.

There was a tense atmosphere as the teams convened around Ian Buffalo's area, preparing for Orford to take the penalty that was awarded three weeks earlier. With Raydon 2-1 up and only 30 seconds on the clock, Raydon's hopes of victory were very much in the arm of Buffalo. It was the Orford striker who was the hero of the day though, rifling the ball home giving Buffalo no chance. The action wasn't over there however. The Orford team celebrated the goal wildly with all their players, and coaching staff piling up on top of each other for several minutes. As the Orford players eventually started to get back up and take their positions for the second half, five of them remained on the ground writhing in agony. What had meant to be a jocular pile up resulted in a crush in which a variety of injuries were sustained ranging from punctured lungs to broken ribs to a snapped cheek. As Orford's five casualties were all unable to continue and they had used all of their substitutes it meant that they were down to six men. As the minimum number of players permitted in a team is 7, the referee had no choice but to abandon the game.

Raydon won the rematch 2-0, McManahammond and Mnunga the goalscorers.

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