

20) TWTD Issue 74, Oct 2004: "Raydon receive lottery boost for new changing rooms"

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Reporter Malcolm Baggio has been rounding up his special herd of Raydon sheep with his footballing sheepdog. He has sheared every one with a rusty old electric razor, gathered up the wool in a bin liner and here he is now wearing a big fluffy news-jumper to show off to all and sundry.

At the start of last season work started to replace the changing shed at Clockton Park but the builders only got as far as demolishing old shed before going out of business. Since then the players have been changing inside red and white striped workmen's tents which midfielder Mansley Kilkorkey acquired through theft. The inadequate size of the tents meant that several players had to get changed out in the open. As a result the club received several complaints from residents of neighbouring houses about players exposing their winkles and bottoms to all and sundry. Raydon had ignored the complaints but in the first match of the new season against Walsham Le Willows Dons the police arrived on the scene following more complaints from residents. They bundled twelve naked players from both teams, who were in the middle of getting changed, into the back of a police van and whisked them off to the police station where they all received cautions for Actual Bodily Nakedness with Intent to Cause Bewilderment. The match had to be abandoned and Raydon's players and management got together the following day to construct a temporary changing facility out of woodworm-ridden balsawood planks and manky plastic bin liners.

Meanwhile, Raydon's multi-millionaire Chairman Lionel Stubbs contacted his cousin Eric Cladding who works for the Lottery Commision to try and persuade him to pull a few strings in order to obtain a lottery grant for the club to build new facilities. Thanks to some textbook blackmailing techniques he was successful and Raydon were awarded a whopping £250,000. The plan was to use the funds to pay for new changing rooms, a new bar complex and a free drink-fuelled party for the players and their family and friends.

Raydon arranged for 250,000 balloons to be released into the sky prior to the kick off of the match against, AC Snape, one for each pound of their windfall. Although this extravagance would make a dent to the tune of £50,000 in their windfall, Raydon's millionaire chairman Lionel Stubbs agreed to offset the cost out of his own personal fortune.

It was a massive operation transporting all the balloons to the ground and inflating them all. Over 200 local villagers volunteered their services during the fortnight prior to the match to ensure they were all inflated in time and a huge marquee was erected to house the balloons.

Unfortunately nobody had considered the fact that in order for the balloons to float off they would need to be filled with helium rather than breath so when the marquee was dismantled to release the balloons, they merely littered the pitch, neighbouring gardens, fields and roads. The match had to be called off and the Snape team had to spend the night sleeping in the open air on the Raydon pitch as the road out of the village was blocked off by balloons.

The army had to be brought in the following day to disperse the balloons with machine gun fire. Raydon were left with a £100,000 clean up bill which Lionel Stubbs refused to pay leaving the club to foot the bill out of their lottery grant. This meant that the club only had enough cash left over for the bar complex and the drink fuelled party. As for the changing rooms, it was agreed that the balsa-wood and binliner shelters and the red and white workmen's tents would be more than adequate until enough money is raised to pay for new changing rooms.

Having not been involved in a goalless match for 20 years, Raydon incredibly drew their first ten games of the season 0-0. Even Raydon's last goalless draw back in 1984 was a cup tie that Raydon won 17-16 on penalties. Raydon manager Roland Peters has been less than impressed with the start to the season, saying "It's all very well not conceding goals but 0-0 draws don't win you football matches. You don't need a rocket surgeon to tell you that."

The goalless draws have been all the more frustrating by the fact that Raydon have had a total of 14 goals ruled out for various offences ranging from offside to "ungentlemanly behaviour in blatant disregard to the manner in which the game was meant to be played";

Peters was so riled at one offside decision against Trimley and Diamonds that he is taking the referee to the European Court of Human Rights. The referee in question who cannot be named due to decency reasons, is currently suspended from daily life.

Raydon have been creating plenty of chances but strikers Dougie McManahammond, Dave Mackinackie and George Mnunga have not had their shooting boots in full working order. The goalless stalemate against Athletico Knodishall was particularly incredible as Raydon racked up an amazing 46 shots on target and 52 shots off target. The most astonishing effort came from from McManahammond. His 20-yard shot was destined for the top right corner with the keeper at full stretch and seemingly having no chance of saving it. However, the kick had loosened a very tiny length of stitching from the ball which the eagle-eyed keeper spied when the ball was only about five yards out, travelling at an estimated 90 mph. He leapt like a kangaroo on a pogo-stick to pinch the minute, almost invisible piece of thread between his thumb

and forefinger, plucking the ball out of the air a trillisecond* before it would have crossed the line.

Peters said after the Knodishall game, “We could have played until the cows go out of fashion and we still wouldn't have scored.”

New summer signings, Buster Davonhaddock and Sid Chopper have added a steely resolve to the Raydon team. Davonhaddock has been a like a starving rabid rottweiler on a short leash on a hot day. Raydon's newly-appointed Carling Opta Statistician Bill Twangler noticed that Davonhaddock caused the loss of around two pints of opposition blood during the opening ten matches of the season. That's more than is contained within the average domestic cat, meaning that if a single cat had been the recipient of Davonhaddock's treatment in one concentrated outburst it would have surely haemorrhaged to a gruesome demise. Ironically, Davonhaddock is a vegetarian.

Sid Chopper, who has been handed the skipper's job by Roland Peters, has bossed the Raydon midfield knocking the ball around intelligently and mixing it with some x-rated tackling.

Raydon's other summer signing, the Homeless Fitzroy Fitzphillips, did not feature in the opening ten games as he was unable to afford subs or the bus fare to Raydon. Any money he is able to acquire is swiftly swallowed up by the fines that Roland Peters has somewhat harshly dished out to punish his failure to turn up. Peters said of Fitzphillips's non-appearance, “His attitude leaves a lot of questions to be desired. I want players playing for this club who would climb over hell or high water and eat their own grandmother just to pull on the purple and tangerine jersey, just as Pete Clockton did back in 1982”

Fitzphillips finally made a trip to Clockton Park on the night of the free drink-fuelled party to celebrate the club's lottery windfall. He walked the ten miles in pouring rain to be present. A marquee had been erected for the party, which was a raucous affair with several gallons of lager consumed and a similar amount of regurgitated.

The following morning the team had a home game against Dynamo Debach but despite Roland Peter's demand that players don't pull out with hangovers, six players did just that, although the actual reasons for absence given ranged from itchy roof of mouth to pins and needles in toes. Fortunately Fitzroy Fitzphillips had passed out in the marquee during the party and was found the following morning by Groundsman Lionel Stubbs swigging a bottle of whisky. Peters handed Fitzphillips a debut up front against Debach as Raydon fielded just 10 players. The kick-off had to be delayed by half an hour to allow Stubbs time to clear all the empty beer cans and vomit off the pitch. When the match got underway Fitzphillips soon showed what Raydon had been missing, finding the back of the net after just 12 seconds with 30-yard scissor-kick. Despite having spent the morning topping up his alcohol levels from the previous night's session, he turned in a thoroughly energetic first half performance, notching two more goals to give 10-man Raydon a three goal lead at half time. While the other players chose to consume orange segments and drink water at half time, Fitzphillips continued to slurp back whisky. Unfortunately he passed out during the break and his fellow players were unable to awaken him so they had to play the second half with nine men. Raydon played a 9-0-0 formation in the second half and defended their lead admirably. Ian Buffalo made series of breathtaking saves whilst Buster Davonhaddock and Derek Diffydale formed an impenetrable central defensive rearguard. Raydon held onto their 3-0 lead to record their first win of the season.

Manager Roland Peters said after the game, “We saw the best and worst of Fitzphillips today. A cracking first half of supreme skill topped off with a brilliant hatrick, and then a second half spent slumped at the pitch side, laying in a pool of his own vomit. If we'd have ended up losing the game in the second half I'd have come down on his guts for garters like a tonne of bricks!”

Fitzphillips did receive some punishment for his actions. Kit manageress Elaine Funtingdale, eager to get the kits in the wash, stripped him to his underpants with the help of several other players. He awoke several hours later, unable to find his clothes and had to walk semi-naked back to Ipswich to the shop doorway in which he resides.

Good news for Raydon fans is that Fitzphillips has decided to enhance his begging potential by taking up the French horn and doing some busking. Buster Davonhaddock is a classically trained French horn player has agreed to give him some lessons. He has also given him an old, scummy, rusty French horn that has been gathering dust, insects and five types of fungus in his loft. Fitzphillips said, “If all goes to plan I should be able to afford the bus fare to Raydon and play in more matches”

At the time of going to press Fitzphillips has only been the subject of two attacks from members of the public in a week as a result of the hideous noise he has been creating. After the first couple of lessons, Buster Davonhaddock had commented that anything less than five attacks in the first week would be a bonus so Fitzphillips looks to be heading in the right direction.

* Timed by Ted's Clocks of Sudbury