

22) TWTD Issue 76, Apr 2005: "Grimeswold defects after agreeing to join Raydon"

Contributed by Daniel Harvey And James Powell
Sunday, 17 April 2005

Bumblebee-cum-Sports Reporter Malcolm Baggio has been busily buzzing round the Raydon news hive collecting Ramblings honey. Here he is stuck inside the double glazing of your kitchen window ready to sting you with the latest from Clockton Park.

Raydon's much vaunted youth coaching course for 7-15 year olds took place during the Christmas holiday and, in the words of Chairman Lionel Stubbs, was "an unmitigated disaster."

The eight young lads who signed up for the course each arranged for their parents to transact a BACS remittance for 80 pounds Stirling direct into chairman Lionel Stubbs's Swiss Bank Account, together with an additional GBP 30 handling charge. The young hopefuls all duly turned up on the first morning of the course excitedly hoping it would lead to an illustrious career in local football.

After overseeing the first ten minutes of the warm-up of the opening training session from the comfort of his car, exasperated manager Roland Peters had already seen enough. He sent the other adult helpers home before driving home himself, leaving the children unsupervised. Their parents came to pick them up seven and a half hours later to find them cowering together in the pouring rain, trying in vain to keep shelter beneath the tatty workmen's tents which the club still utilise as makeshift changing rooms.

Fortunately, Lionel Stubbs incorporated a clause in 2 point size font on the course application form stating that the "course fees are totally and utterly non-refundable" and the club "reserve the right to cut the course short at any point whatsoever and take absolutely no responsibility for the welfare of the course participants under any circumstances in the world, ever." The legality of the clause is currently being investigated by Watchdog, Panorama, Horizon, Roger Cook, the United Nations and John Craven's Newsround.

Meanwhile, Raydon manager Roland Peters was left devastated, shocked, humiliated and disillusioned after trialist Timmy Grimeswold turned down his offer of a contract and instead signed for title rivals Belstead St Germaine. Grimeswold had stated that he would sign for the Clockton Park club after his successful trial spell but he went back on his word at the last minute. Announcing his decision, Grimeswold said, "I was all set to sign for Raydon but when the offer came from Belstead I had to accept it. I measured out the distance between where I live and the two clubs with a laser-guided digital trundle wheel and Belstead is 12 metres nearer. It'll save me literally dozens of pence every year in travel expenses."

An extremely fired up and emotional Roland Peters told a press conference, "This is one of the darkest days of my life, let alone in football. If I were to say what I think of that f***** **** you would probably have to asterisk it out when you come to print it so I won't say it. You trust a person and...they...just..." Peters broke down in tears and had to be helped out of the room by Chairman Lionel Stubbs.

Peters would soon have an opportunity to gain revenge over Grimeswold as Raydon were scheduled to play away at Belstead in a top of the table clash two weeks after Grimeswold signed for them.

So desperate was Peters to get back at Grimeswold and to beat his new team that he took two weeks off work and packed his wife off to stay with her third cousin on the Isle of Mull so he could focus on plotting Belstead's downfall. He got little sleep throughout this period, instead spending his nights pacing up and down his bedroom repeatedly playing out entire 90 minutes of match scenarios in his mind.

One night he spent four straight hours sitting in his loft with a torch, staring blankly at Belstead's likely team sheet, grinding his teeth until his gums started bleeding.

The players were not spared his frenzied preparations either. Peters got an old school friend who is now in the army to take the squad to Thetford Forest where they spent 48 hours on a tortuous military exercise running about in the woods in their underpants being fired at with cork bullets, and shouted at by a sadistic ex-colonel, without food and having to drink stagnant pond water.

The idea was to build their character and stamina before the big game but instead the players emerged from their experience with a variety of ailments. Numerous players suffered from sustained bouts of diarrhoea whilst chronic bruising and worryingly deep flesh wounds which were a hairs breadth away from becoming gangrenous, were in abundance. Buster Davonhaddock suffered 80 degree bruising whilst Saul Quan picked up a small fissure 0.8mm* inside his anus, which caused him excruciating pain, as a result of a particularly vigorous deluge of diarrhoea. George Mnunga was also ruled out of the Belstead game after getting his foot stuck in a rabbit hole and twisting his ankle 720 degrees.

Upon hearing the injury situation Peters went into a fit of nervous fury, throwing his double bed out of his bedroom window and stomping down to Clockton Park where he sat swigging a two litre bottle of whiskey completely naked in the middle of the Raydon pitch for 12 hours swearing incoherently at the top of his voice, before passing out.

He awoke the following day to find himself surrounded by two teams of eight and nine year old footballers about to kick off a match. It emerged it was the final of the Betamax Youth Cup in which Raydon's Under 9s were competing. There was also a huge crowd of spectators at the pitchside and Sky Sports Cameras were in attendance to broadcast a live programme on youth football. Peters hastily scurried to the side of the pitch clutching his genitals in his hands. He snapped off a fluffy microphone boom that Sky were using and covered his manhood and testes with it. He scuttled off home as quickly as possible to avoid any attention, although his gland and sac had already been seen by 200,000 shell-shocked Sky viewers as well as the gawping 300 plus record-crowd in attendance at Clockton Park.

This mildly embarrassing incident prompted Peters to pull himself together and focus on the following day's match against Belstead. He spent five hours scribbling down and throwing away over a thousand different permutations of his team. He finally settled on the line up he had first written down, spending another three hours rummaging through his dustbin to find it.

On the morning of the game Peters was so nervous that he spent 90% of it on the toilet and 9.8% with his head inside it**. Peters had called the Raydon team to the ground three hours before kick-off. He had hired Steve Cram to deliver a rousing two-hour pep talk to his players before he took over to deliver his own passionate, expletive-filled war cry during which he sweated so much that a small puddle had formed at his feet by the time he had finished.

It was now only ten minutes to kick off and the Raydon team were so fired up and determined to win that they locked arms and formed a huddle on the pitch. They remained in the position for several minutes in silence, except for the occasional yell of aggression, while they psyched themselves up for the match. So focused were they that they didn't notice the Belstead team take to the pitch.

Raydon had earlier won the toss and opted to kick-off but the players were so deep in thought that they didn't realise the game was about to start. The referee allowed the Raydon team a few minutes to finish their team huddle before finally losing patience and blowing the whistle to start the game. As no Raydon player was in position to kick-off, the referee duly blew the whistle again and awarded a free kick against them for time-wasting. The Raydon players were oblivious to all this, still standing in a huddle with their eyes closed in a trance-like state.

Belstead quickly took the free kick, with that man Grimeswold calmly lofting the ball from the half way line over the huddle of Raydon players and into the empty net to give them a 1-0 lead. The Raydon players broke from their huddle when they heard the Belstead fans cheering and Roland Peters swearing at the absolute loudest voice that a human being is physically able to without electronic amplification.

The remaining 89mins and 50 seconds of the game passed without notable incident. Result 1-0 to Belstead.

After the game a somewhat volcanic Peters let rip at his players with all the rage and venom he was able to muster. So vociferous was his swearing that 15 people living nearby made complaints and Peters received a formal warning from the council's Environmental Health Ombudsman and the local Church of England Diocese.

Peters spent the following few days wallowing at home in drunken self-pity. He refused to see or speak to anyone or anything. However, there was a twist a few days after the match when Lionel Stubbs called to tell him that league officials had made a clerical error when completing Grimeswold's player registration.

Apparently, all the paperwork had been prepared ready for him to sign for Raydon and a junior administrator had failed to amend them properly when he changed his mind and decided to sign for Belstead. Grimeswold had in fact been legally registered as a Raydon player for the match and the league, after consulting their legal representatives, therefore awarded victory to Raydon as Belstead had effectively fielded an ineligible player. In such circumstances the margin of victory awarded would normally be 3-0 but as Grimeswold had scored the only goal of the game whilst registered as a Raydon player, they ruled that Raydon be awarded a 4-0 victory. Belstead were also docked 25 points which plants them 7 points adrift at the foot of the table instead of vying for the championship with Raydon.

Grimeswold has since moved to a small hamlet in the Southern Hemisphere to escape the ill feeling.

*Thanks to Janice of Marlon's Measures, Weights and Geometrics of Hatfield Peverel for her patient measurements and for filing her nails prior to undertaking them.

** Peters spent the other 0.2% of the morning undertaking other preparatory tasks such as shaving, washing, eating, reading the paper and popping down the village to place an advertisement in the local newsagents for a set of plastic beakers.