



Saturday 1st September 2018



Southend 1 – Charlton 2



It was just like a scene from one of J K Rowling's books. In the middle of the pitch, performing a drunken impression of Snape, was the referee. Up in the stands, Voldemort was masquerading as Rodney whilst inside the Gryffindor common room Denzil was reproducing some of the low points from his three day festival in an abandoned car park! No death eaters though. Mind you, the way that Trigs was putting away his meat pie you could almost imagine that their arrival was imminent!

The game though itself was hardly spell bounding. Indeed the few moments that were seemed to have all been inspired by the dark arts; quite possibly being cast by those who hail from the house of Slytherin. Let's take a glance at some of them!

Refereeridicuklitus

Ingredients

- One fat, rotund, and clearly unfit referee
- A year's supply of chocolate frog's

The FA likes to keep on bleating about how we should respect their officials. Which would be a fair and valid point where they not to keep on sending us such sad specimens as Kettle and today's abject offering, Mr Huxtable. As if cast out of the same blancmange mould, these two officials acted like Boggarts almost from the word go. Rarely prepared to wobble outside the centre circle, they performed like whistling clowns. Often miles away from an incident they would nevertheless make a call which was far too often the wrong one.

At Luton, Kettle surpassed all records, by ignoring so many fouls that, if employed by Bernard Matthews, more than a few Christmas dinners would have been missing a vital ingredient. Today though, his comedy side kick was not so much culpable of missing misdemeanours as in his interpretation of them. He also preferred to play a more tactical role; getting in the way of so many of our passes that, had he not forgotten to put on his Charlton shirt, many of their supporters would have voted him to be their best defender!

But where he fell down most was in his interpretation of events. Kightly gets wiped out by a tackle, so late that even Denzil could beat it into work. A savage, clearly premeditated foul that could have seen him sidelined for several weeks, and all the referee awards is a yellow card!

Yet late in the game, Kightly gets thumped by one of their players and he gets sent off. Yes, admittedly he did retaliate with a kick. But, going back to the point about paying officials respect, had the referee been anywhere near the incident and not a least three postcodes away, then any preventative action taken by said official could have avoided Kightly feeling that he had no choice other than to take the law into his own hands.

So, instead of just one, two players got sent off. Actually it was three because that well known 'Throat Strangler' Oxley also got sent off for participating in his favourite nefarious activity. Indeed he must have been wearing a cloak of invisibility at the time because not even the video cameras captured the moment. Yet, Huxtable, when questioned lately by Chrissy P, was adamant that the Charlton player involved would now be doing Headless Nick impressions, but for his timely arrival (Yeah two hours after the event!). Utter tripe!

Just like his take on their first goal. Turner was so clearly pushed it's a wonder that he managed to remain inside the stadium and not become yet another obstacle to traffic on Victoria Avenue. But did Mr Huxtable take note of the fact and so disallow the goal? Not a hope!

Whereas his mentor, who if ever spotted by the Japanese would be in grave danger of being at the sharp end of a harpoon, took a totally opposite view when faced with the Southend 'equaliser' at Luton when a defender's shadow had been briefly disturbed.

Mr Huxtable was also, just like Kettle, clearly unfit. The F.A are required, and indeed, do conduct fitness testing of their officials. But proving that you have the ability to pull a fag out of a cigarette packet with one hand whilst employing the other to unwrap a chocolate frog is hardly a stretching exercise. It should however be pointed out that, in the interest of being fair and even handed (Attributes that no one would ever accuse either Kettle or Huxtable of possessing) that neither of his two linesman were up to the job either. So to blame just Huxtable for our defeat would be unfair.

Notrappythebally

Ingredients

- 1 + player(s) that can't control the ball
- 1 Ball moving through the air and/or faster than 5 mph

Unfortunately several persons, other than the officials, also have to take a share of blame for our demise. Amongst their number are home players whose ability to trap a ball in flight is, to put it frankly, nowhere near good enough.

Pass them a ball to run onto, provide them with a cross to head or even an open goal and they might do a job for you. But simply pass them the ball and you might as well have just played it to the nearest member of the opposition.

It's really despairing to witness the efforts of other's being so casually thrown away. Yet that is exactly what happened time and time again. A blue shirt would sweat buckets in order to win the ball and then, moments after passing it to any one of the most guilty trio (Robinson, McLaughlin and Kightly) have to do it all over again.

Actually that's a mite tough on Kightly who played much better today than he has for a few weeks. Equally McLaughlin might prefer to claim that his inability to hold a ball is down to fear of getting injured rather than lack of ability. Robinson though, a player processed of both speed and dashing feet, has few excuses. Play him a pass and 9 times out of 10 it will be spilled.

Probably his team mates just take the view that a 10% chance is better than nothing and Robinson does score. In fact he did today, sliding in at the back post to get us back into the game very quickly after we 'conceded' a very pushy goal. Sometimes it would seem then that you have to be prepared to swim with the Kappa's if you want to feel your feet tickled.

ShootyIndysighfulness

Ingredients

- Goal scoring opportunity
- Lack of confidence

Seemingly our squad is made up of really, really nice, blokes. So nice in fact that rather than score themselves, they would much more prefer it if someone else did the job for them!

Any claims that either goalkeeper in this game was overworked are as spurious as Albert's denials that he is guilty. Neither being actually called upon to make a save other than when the goals were conceded? Of

course, in Denzil's world of maffs, such a 100% record would be praiseworthy but inside a game where both sets of forwards are expected to at least stretch a goalkeepers back once or twice, it's more than disappointing.

Sure defenders, and their underhand tactics, have placed a premium upon goal scoring. But to go through almost an entire 90 minutes with less shots on goal than the UK receives points in Eurovision is, well, shameful. But just who should the finger be pointed at?

The forwards who don't have a pop at goal when an opportunity to do so presents itself

Or

The midfield who lack the creativity to play passes upon a consistent enough basis for a forward to be confident enough to feel that he doesn't have to make every shot count because he may only ever get the one!

The probable answer is a mixture of both. With each taking an equal share of the blame.

Our forwards do unfortunately 'play safe' when a 'risk' shot could bring down the house. But there again, can you recall, even once this season, a forward being played a ball when he has a clear run at goal? Yes, the shouts of Robinson against Plymouth, Robinson against Bristol Rovers and even Robinson against Charlton do have a degree of validity but those making such calls are referred to the next spell.

OOhMovedTheGoalPostsThenThen

Ingredients

- Goal scoring opportunity
- Someone who should have gone to Specsavers

A number of times this season players have broken through a determined defensive line creating a one on one situation with a stranded goalkeeper. However, barely have we risen from our seats in eager anticipation, but a blind, hurried, shot has missed its target, not by inches but by yards!

Before each game, those likely to have a goal scoring opportunity practice their shooting. It's never a pretty sight; shots going here there and everywhere. Indeed the only person who ever puts the ball where he wants to upon a nearly 100% basis is the goalkeeping coach. Observe him and you wish that it was he that was leading the line rather than some other names. His shots, aimed as they are to test and stretch the reflexes of our keeper are both hard and accurate Perhaps though he would be better employed if he was training our forwards instead!

NoCumHoffLinee

Ingredients

- Any high ball into the six yard box
- Refusal to step off a painted white line

This is perhaps the most contentious spell of the five that are being discussed within this report. Not because there is not broad agreement over whether or not the goalkeeper concerned should come off his line, but rather his reasons for declining to do so!

One school of thought feels that it's just not part of his game. Therefore he remains rooted to the line instead of coming off it to catch/ fist the ball. Our central defenders, in this goalkeepers view, are there to do that job. It's simply not his.

Another school though thinks that, as a number of our keepers have all shown a reluctance to come off their line, that it is how they are being trained to play. Were it not, then surely their ears would have been well and truly blasted off by both manager and their fellow teammates.

Charlton's winner could have been prevented had only Oxley come out for the ball rather than leaving it to one of his defenders to belt it away for a corner. And, on a number of other occasions, a goalkeeper prepared to mix it with an opposing player could have resulted in the ball becoming safe rather than remaining in play. However only extremely rarely, and to Boycie's utter despair, do any of our goalkeepers display this ability. Rather odd given that in almost every such situation a whistle gets blown if as much as a gust of wind catches the keeper's shirt. Surely it's almost a win - win situation?

No visit to Hogwarts would be complete without a visit to the headmasters study. So, climbing up to the second floor and tapping our wands upon the stone gargoyle whilst mouthing the words 'Lemon Drops', here we go!

Chrissy P now faces a mountain of a challenge. A mixture of injuries, suspensions and call ups for International duty mean that almost half his squad are going to be AWOL for the next three games. Fixtures that include games against, yet to lose a game, Peterborough, and high flying Fleetwood. Ok, so those games are at home with a visit to struggling Shrewsbury in-between, but can anybody realistically see us getting even a point from that trio of games? It's almost as if an entire herd of Dementors are descending all about us. All the pre-season optimism and excitement just draining away.

The loan market has closed as indeed so too has the transfer window. Lenny's move from Sheffield Utd to Millwall though might bring in some cash. Enough though for Ron to agree to Chrissy seeking out some free transfers? Very doubtful, especially as it's for such a relatively short period, long though it is going to seem.

At the end of it though, at least six of the absent dozen will be fit and raring to go. A case of dark tunnel directly ahead but bright lights in the distance then. Even so, not since the early days of Paul Sturrock (How good was it to see him at the Plymouth game giving us all a wave) have we been so stretched. Big test then, not only for Chrissy P, but also our entire team!

Come on you Blues!!