



Tuesday 1st February 2022



Southend 2 – Barnet 1



Sam Dalby should be seeking to have a pregnancy test just as soon as possible after his experiences during this game, with prospective paternity suites being raised against the entire Barnet team, including their goalkeeper. Unfortunately though, he will not be able to call upon the match officials as witnesses, cos they saw nuffin!

They didn't see his clothes being ripped off. They didn't see him being thrown to the ground and they didn't see him being grabbed by the throat and held so tightly that he could barely breath. So strange it is indeed that these three, alone amongst over 6,000 others, failed to see just what they were being paid to be there to see.

But then, that's the sort of dross that's being thrown in our direction by the football authorities. Organisations that worry that their precious game is being brought into disrepute dare a manager say a single word of criticism regarding their beloved pets, yet at the same time they silently condone, week after week, game after game, their representatives' dire performances.

The crime sheet for the three officials at this game rivals that of Alberts, and to relay everything laid down inside their rap sheets would mean this report running to several reams. That said, the incident, where two players, one from each team, got booked, is a fairly representative example of the referees' level of incompetence and so it will be portrayed in some detail.

The whole thing only ever reached the levels that it did due to his total inaction. Two players were competing for the ball directly in front of the East Stand, about 30 yards or so inside their half, when our player got clearly fouled. The linesman, two yards away, totally failed to react and so Dennis got his legs chopped off once again. But still neither the referee nor the linesman cared to intervene.

The ball, by now bored with the whole affair, decided to exit the scene and so attracted the attention of another Barnet player who, up to now, had been totally uninvolved in the assault upon Dennis. Having raced to the ball, he was just about to turn and give it a good old welly up the pitch (There was nothing subtle about Barnet's game plan) , when Dennis, who had somehow managed to escape the clutches of his assailant, took it away from him.

Instant reaction from the referee who blew his whistle awarding a foul against Dennis. It was a totally ridiculous, and indeed biased, decision and it set the whole fiasco off. Players from both teams getting involved, and handbags being strewn around as if it was ladies' night at the local disco. In all truth though it was all a lot of nothingness even if it did cause a few cockles to get spilt within the East stand.

However, this was the referee's big moment. Not only was he getting to wave his yellow cards around, but later on, when he got home, and just before getting tucked into bed along with his teddy bear, he would have some important letters to write to Football H.Q. But though for his failure to award a free kick to Dennis in the first place, nothing untoward whatsoever would have happened.

Ok, so both Mike and Boycie would have fainted in surprise had we actually been awarded a foul (They were only ever being awarded in one direction and, in most cases, were only ever the result of the referees own overactive imagination). But other than that, the game would just have gone on its merry way. Instead, there had been quite a bit of a fracas and an innocent player, Dennis, had received a quite unmerited caution. Wonder if the authorities will take any action against their fellow cretins once they've had a chance to view the video?

Umbrellas at the ready guys! There's a squadron of flying pigs overhead, and they have a certain look of concentration upon their faces! If they don't do it, the league most certainly will!

But if you allow monkeys to wear suits, what can you expect?

Perhaps we have simply become numbed. But the officials in the past two or three matches didn't seem too bad. They certainly weren't much good, but compared to this bunch of goons, they were Pierluigi Collina ('The Skull'). Tonight's offal was so rank that they didn't so much leave a bad taste in the mouth as completely destroy an appetite. And, when you are talking about Trigger, that is quite something!

With Cardwell still injured following our game at Dover, this fixture provided an opportunity for new signing Callum Powell to show just what he was all about. Imagine someone about as tall as Egbri but with tree trunks for thighs, and you will get the general picture. Oh, and add in Mach III engines and a cannon with a 18" barrel as he has a very powerful shot too. Another fine signing by King Kev? still a mite early to say really. But certainly on his play tonight, the signs look extremely encouraging. Indeed, he received a standing ovation from the Roots Hall faithful when he was substituted late in the game.

Dennis had a quiet match on Saturday. But not only was he returning from injury, but the pitch too was certainly not one that suited his game. Tonight though, without any doubt, he was on fire, taking just five minutes to put his name upon the scoresheet. A shot from the edge of the box by Demetriou could only be parried away by the keeper who spilled it straight into the path of our loanee from Norwich who responded by doing what comes naturally to him. Scoring his 5th goal in eight games.

Just why Brown would not give him a game might be a mystery to those who admired our former manager, But not to those who held more reserved opinions about him. Whatever, play Dennis, Brown would not, and so our league position just became worse and worse. Browns' replacement, Maher hesitated too, naturally enough wanting to evaluate his own players first. But eventually he introduced Dennis into the side and just look at the results. We have zoomed up the table to the point where we are now sitting nicely in mid table, far above the relegation zone. Furthermore, the team is once again full of confidence and scoring regularly!

BBC Colchester was wetting itself over the news that Col Poo had just brought in 10 new players. We too though have been busy. But whilst they have worked upon the principle of 'Fill the field with enough cows and surely some milk will be one of the results', our Kev has carefully planned and built an entire creamery. Each one of his signings has been a peach, and the results are already beginning to bear fruit. *(See what I did there? Not only pitiful, but also rather obvious. It clearly therefore doesn't really need any further explanation. But please do bear in mind that Albert is having to have someone read this out to him and even when they speak slowly)*

Just before the half hour mark, Dennis did the business again. Swopping in once more to take full advantage of a rebound after a bullet of a shot by Clifford was only partially saved. Two goals up and still sixty more minutes to go. Not only was Dennis on fire but also everybody else inside a blue shirt. It's been soooooooooooooooooooooo long since we've seen them play like this, and Roots Hall was a rockin'.

Mention of our fantastic support is becoming a regular feature of these scribblings simply because it is what it is. simply superb. Our journey over the past three, four, seasons has been torturous, and many could have been forgiven for falling by the wayside. But that hasn't happened. Instead, we have stuck by our team throughout. So, to now see them, not only turn the corner, but also rising up the table at such a rate of knots is just incredible. Come on you Blues!!

Party poopers Barnet were preparing to put a spoke between our wheels though. Given their heavy defeat at the weekend, they could have been forgiven for just tightening down the hatches and trying to weather the blue storm out. However instead, they opted to attack and attack.

Not always fairly, not always within the book of rules (A completely unknown publication to any of the three officials) but, equally, it does have to said, with a lot of speed and tenacity about their game. It wasn't pretty, but it did get them a goal back. A hack from distance, one that Arnold never even saw coming (His view had been totally blocked by a defender), giving the score line a more respectable look, if only from our visitor's perspective.

So the state of play remained until both teams headed back into the dressing rooms at halftime. We had been trying to play football but, harassed and brutalised under the referee's very nose by an energetic Barnet side, we were finding life difficult. They though, a single goal away from restoring parity in the match, still had an element of belief that they could turn things around, and so an interesting second period beckoned.

WIFI reception at the Centre of the Universe is apparently a tad unreliable. Mike knew this because of the many, and not too varied, swear word emulating from all his fellow Thunderbirds as they attempted to indulge in their palm piloting passion. Despite all the glowing hands surrounding him, 'Smoke me a kipper' attempted to open a conversation. Something that was once upon a time a halftime tradition. But in the fairy land of today, it is much more interesting, indeed seemingly a matter of some desperate urgency, that you communicate with a machine possibly some thousands of miles away instead. So, it was a lost cause before he even started. No mention of the game, no talk about our two goals, but rather just a barrelful of woeful moaning and inconsolable weeping over their inability to get a 'signal'.

The second half was a lively affair between two very determined teams. At times it was extremely untidy, and it probably wasn't one for the connoisseurs. However, and despite the atrocious referring, it kept you on the edge of your seat as, first one team took over the ascendancy, and then the other. Indeed, it wasn't until the game entered its final minutes that the Barnet heads began to drop. They had huffed and puffed with tremendous effort, but no way was our defensive wall going to collapse and so allow them to score an equaliser.

Their fans would probably claim that they deserved one. However, we for part, would counter that, had the referee awarded us even half of the free-kicks that he most certainly should have, we would have just as probably increased our lead and so put the game to bed long before the break.

Earlier in the season, we were had little awareness of just how bad the officials are at this level, and suffered accordingly. But as the evidence of this game clearly showed, painful experience has been put to good use and so now, rather than stopping playing, expecting a whistle, we simply carry on, confident in the knowledge that its owner's concentration is elsewhere. Possibly speculating over whether or not mummy will have finished preparing toast soldiers by the time they get home.

An assessment of just where we are as a club is probably now called for. Back in August, we took to the road in a broken-down campervan. It was badly corroded and ran badly. Sometimes it got us thereabouts, but far more often it did not. Nevertheless, the situation was seemingly being allowed to simply deteriorate, but then something finally got done, our chauffer got scrapped.

Ideally it seemed, a shiny new vehicle would now be positioned upon our forecourt, complete with lots of extras. But, despite the major cause for our embarrassing league position departing, there was still a lot of associated scrap metal piled up all around the place. So, what was really needed was a clean sweep of the broom and thankfully it arrived in the form of Maher, Currie and Bentley. What a breath of fresh air these three have been!

Of course, a broken-down nag doesn't turn into a thoroughbred overnight, despite all of Rodney's desperate praying. Such things take time, and we, the fans, were asked to be patient whilst the necessary structure was put into place. None of us, its suspected, really knew just what this all meant. However, time has revealed that it involved the introduction of people like Collymore and John Still into the club. A very badly needed

CEO also appeared. Gradually therefore, what once had been a complete shambles, began to take on the look of an organisation that knew what it was all about.

our ramshackle, tumble-down old building had therefore been provided with some much-required scaffolding. However, in terms of a team able to compete in this division, we were still relying upon a skeleton crew. We therefore needed to add rather a lot of flesh to bare bones as soon as possible, and indeed many managers would have simply taken a butchers knife to the whole squad and then demanded money from the chairmen for a new one.

The three amigos though instead took another route, taking time to consider their options whilst all the tinkering around with the team to judge just who had something to offer and who did not. Only once that had been determined, did they set about seeking to strengthen the squad. Even then, despite our perilous league ranking, the exercise was conducted carefully and thoughtfully. The result being that we now support a team that is closer to the promotion zone than relegation.

There is though still a tremendous amount of work, both on and off the pitch, to be done. So, whilst it is immensely encouraging to hear of people speaking seriously about our promotion prospects, especially after centuries of the only subject being our imminent drop through yet another divisions trapdoor, such talk is extremely premature. Disappointment is never a dish that is enjoyed much. Anticipation however, is something that can be savoured. So, rather than dream, rather unrealistically, about this season and probably even next, lets instead start preparing our taste buds for promotion and indeed then, many seasons ahead, back in the football league come 2024/5.

Come on you Blues!!