



SHRIMPERS TRUST



NEWSLETTER – Volume 2 Issue 17

THE INTRODUCTION – Editor Robert Craven

A HAPPY NEW YEAR to all members of the Shrimpers Trust, who I hope enjoyed a fantastic festive season.

Certainly results on the pitch for our beloved club have picked up immensely over the past month and a bit, with the only defeats coming at the hands of Tottenham Hotspur (after extra time at White Hart Lane), Birmingham City (top of the Championship) and Derby County (at the time second in the table).

The Shrimpers have been unbeaten in normal time away from home, keeping clean sheets in goalless draws at Luton Town and Norwich City, as well as in victories at Cardiff City and Barnsley, the latter coming in the third round of the F.A. Cup.

That 1-0 success in south Wales, a region that we have come to love over the course of the past couple of seasons, marked a first win away from Roots Hall since the start of March in a League fixture, and a first away win in the second tier of English football since a 2-1 win at Stoke City in November 1996, a run of 26 fixtures.

But now that the sequence has been ended, there is no reason why Blues can't start to climb up the Coca-Cola Championship table.

There are two ways of looking at the current predicament – the pessimist will say that even though we have picked up points, we are still realistically three wins away from getting out of the drop zone. The optimistic will say that without the recent good form, we would have been down already.

There is belief in the camp again, and you can see that from the way that the team has been playing of late. Even at 1-0 against Derby County, a side riding high on the back of four consecutive wins, there was a real hunger to grab an equaliser, and the Shrimpers were desperately unlucky not to score at least once.

For their part, the Rams looked like a side that were on their way to promotion, not because of the way that they outclassed Blues – on the contrary, they didn't – but because they picked up a hard-fought win away from home, remaining solid throughout a second-half onslaught.

In the past six weeks, Southend have hosted Southampton, Birmingham City and Derby County, all up until the past few seasons top division clubs, and all capable of returning to the top flight.

I actually think that Saints were the best of the three sides, but Blues turned them over with a well-deserved 2-1 victory. Birmingham ran riot in a 4-0 success, but of the three, they impressed me least.

Derby picked up exactly the type of win that Southend would have got in the past couple of seasons – well-planned, well thought-out and well-executed.

This season, wins will obviously be harder to come by, but the next four months will see the majority of clubs in the mix-up for relegation come to Roots Hall.

Derby trio Billy Davies, Marc Edworthy and Steve Howard all mentioned in the aftermath of the game how difficult it was to get three points in southeast Essex, so as long as that remains the case, there is a good chance that Blues can fight their way out of trouble.

Hull City robbed Southend with a 3-2 win, probably the low-point of a wretched run of form at the time, but Leeds United, Barnsley (who were fortunate to grab a draw at the Hall in the F.A. Cup), Queens Park Rangers, Luton Town, Leicester City and Crystal Palace all have to make the trip yet.

It would be fanciful to suggest that the Shrimpers will get maximum points from all of those fixtures, but a highly obtainable five wins would represent half of the work done towards safety.

Before that, though, there are some battles off of the field to be won, most notably, at the time of going to print, at the civic chambers of Southend Council and Rochford District Council.

I hope that this newsletter is able to reach you before Wednesday and Thursday so that you will be able to lend your support to the cause.

On Wednesday, January 24 at 2 p.m. in the Civic Centre, on Victoria Avenue, Southend Council's Development Control Committee will



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consider the plans submitted for the construction of a new stadium for the club at Fossetts Farm.

A little over 24 hours later, at 7.30 p.m. on Thursday, January 25, Rochford District Council will look over the plans for three training pitches and additional car parking spaces on RDC land.

Southend United supporters, and Shrimpers Trust members, are urged to attend the meetings if they possibly can (and in the case of the Southend meeting, this will be extremely tough due to work commitments), turning up at 1.30 p.m. and 7:15 p.m. on Wednesday and Thursday respectively.

Planning Officers have recommended that the Council reject or defer the decision over the plans on the grounds of excessive retail development and the inadequacies of the highways.

However, that is not necessarily to say that the Council will completely throw out the plans. Trust member and Town Planner (outside of the region) Gary Peck has written an excellent piece for the Shrimpers Trust website, which can be found at www.shrimperstrust.co.uk, in the Fossetts Farm section.

In it, Gary recounts the positive, as well as negative, sections of the Planning Officers' report. There is great encouragement in statements such as: *"there are no objections to the stadium or its design", "the residential element...is acceptable as part of the overall package in the location proposed" and "highways/transportation issues...are considered to be capable of adequate resolution."*

Notably, Gary informs us that there will still be plenty of opportunity to recover any lost ground by the Planning Officers' advice that: *"Many if not all of the detailed deficiencies can be overcome by the submission of amended plans and additional information."*

Please visit the website and read Gary's eloquent piece in full by clicking www.shrimperstrust.co.uk, particularly if you are intending to visit either meeting and would like some background information as to what to expect.

It is imperative that as many Southend United supporters attend these two meetings as possible. There is a chance that the Councillors will refuse the plans point-blank, and a large Shrimpers supporting presence could go a long way to averting that scenario.

Orderly fans, sporting club colours, will help to convince the Councils that the supporters of Southend United Football Club care about the club, and the town's, future. The more of the mighty Blue Army that have to be locked out, the more chance there is that the Council will realise that this new stadium really matters to the people of southeast Essex.

Our rivals from up the A12, Colchester United, recently had a wonderful evening when their supporters crowded the Town Hall to celebrate the backing for their Community Stadium at Cuckoo Farm. Now it is our turn.

Southend United supporters have been magnificent over the last six weeks. At times this season, it has not been easy to back the team, but after finally recording that elusive League win against Southampton, and save for a depressing moment or two at home to Birmingham, the fans have been superb.

The away backing at venues like Luton, Coventry, Cardiff and Barnsley in particular has been nothing short of tremendous, and I have no doubt that, in its small part, it has played a role in lifting spirits and helping the squad realise that they can remain in the Coca-Cola Championship this season.

Now it is time for that support to spread into the Council chambers, and for us to back the club on new territory.

This is our opportunity to help shape the legacy of Southend, and of Southend United, so we must grasp it. For the club to remain in the Championship, and to be able to survive and progress, then we need a new stadium at Fossetts Farm, and we need it sooner rather than later.

Up The Shrimpers – keep the faith and make your voice heard,

Rob



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THE SHRIMPERS TRUST KIDS

Blues' Youths Results

Sat 09 Dec | Puma Youth Alliance League | Wycombe Wanderers (a) | W2-0
 Wed 13 Dec | F.A. Youth Cup | Coventry City (a) | D0-0 (L1-3 on penalties)
 Sat 16 Dec | Puma Youth Alliance League | Leyton Orient (h) | Result expunged
 Sat 06 Jan | Puma Youth Alliance League | Portsmouth (a) | W4-1
 Sat 13 Jan | Puma Youth Alliance League | Luton Town (h) | W4-1

Southend United Under-18s big match of the season ended in an agonising penalty shoot-out defeat to Coventry City at the Ricoh Arena. Blues Youths battled hard to try and get in front, but each time found themselves thwarted by a defender on the goalline. James Lindie and Charles Ademeno were a consistent threat until both were withdrawn late in the game after giving all they had, whilst the defence – and in particular Shrimpers Trust Kid Reiss Noel at centre-half – remained solid.

However, when it came down to the dreaded spot-kicks, Noel was the only Shrimper to find the back of the net, and the Sky Blues 100% percent record from twelve yards saw them earn the right to travel to Reading in Round Four.

Three days later there was controversy at Boots & Laces as Leyton Orient defeated the teenage Shrimpers 1-0 thanks to a free-kick from substitute Scott Grange just under ten minutes from the end. However, the result was subsequently expunged by the Football League Youth Alliance after it emerged that the O's fielded four substitutes during the second half.

The other three results in the past month or so have been extremely encouraging. Lee Smyth and Ademeno netted in a 2-0 victory at Wycombe Wanderers, who were previously unbeaten in the Youth Alliance League, during December, and following a 4-1 win at Premiership youngsters Portsmouth, a brace from James Lindie and further efforts from Smyth and Carl Patten handed Southend the same margin of victory over Luton Town.

THE TRUST – What We've Done

Quiz Night (20 January 2007)

Over 100 people turned up at our most recent Quiz Night, held in the Shrimpers Bar, on fourteen tables. They enjoyed a fish-and-chip supper from our good friends at the Fish House, whilst the questions were set by Guy Rickard, with brother Nigel and Paul Yeomanson on marking duties. Thank-you to all who attended, raising around £600 for the Shrimpers Trust. We will be attempting to schedule one final quiz evening in before the end of the season, so keep your eyes open in the usual places for more information.

Shrimpers Trust Annual Christmas Draw

Our annual Christmas Raffle actually took place on New Years Day, on the pitch at Roots Hall with Blues 3-0 up against West Brom at half-time. And the day went on to get an awful lot better for our six winners, who were as follows:

1st Prize	£1000	Roger French
2nd Prize	£500	Ella Grace
3rd Prize	£250	Eileen Jeeves
4th Prize	Hi-Tec Golf Shoes	Deborah Davidson
5th Prize	SUFC Signed Football	Gary Sanders
6th Prize	Bottle of Champagne	John Crabb

Thanks to all who bought and sold tickets, raising in the region of £3000 for the Trust.



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Shrimpers Trust Events List

****AVAILABLE NOW!!!** Team We Call United DVD**

The Shrimpers Trust made 'The Team We Call United' DVD available from Thursday 14 December, and over a hundred copies had been sold by Christmas. If you would like a copy of the recording, which was made by the Bushell brothers in the late 1960s, please complete the request form at the back of this newsletter. There will also be a Question & Answer session, hopefully with Shrimpers legends Billy Best and Andy Smilie, in the New Year, although as yet the date has yet to be confirmed. Please keep checking www.shrimperstrust.co.uk for more information.

Saturday 17 March: Shrimpers Trust Race Night

Venue: The Shrimpers Bar, Roots Hall | Time: 7:30 for an 8:00 p.m. start | Contact: Paul Yeomanson at info@shrimperstrust.co.uk | Tickets: £3 (available from the Shrimpers Bar or via our website)

Sunday 29 April: FPD Annual Roots Hall Programme Fair

Venue: The Shrimpers Bar, Roots Hall | Time: 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. | Admission: 50p.

Shrimpers Trust member David Stacey and the Football Programme Directory bring their annual fair to the Shrimpers Bar the day after the final home game of the season against Luton Town. A must for anyone interested in Southend United and local football memorabilia.

100 Club

Congratulations to Donna Stone, who picked up our £400 bumper prize after being picked out by independent Trust member Roy Keyes at the Norwich City fixture. There is still time to contact Alan Perry on alanperry4@hotmail.com or by calling 01702 476 458 to register your interest in the 100 Club and put yourself in with a chance of winning the weekly prize of just under £40. The more people that sign up to the scheme, the more this prize increases. Recent winners have included Kathy Jeffreys, Mike Smith, Bryan Woodford, Graham Hart and Paul Clancy.

Quid-a-Goal

Ricky Duncan is the recipient of our Quid-a-Goal money this season and, having sponsored first-year professional Joel Ledgister's shirt for the 2006/7 campaign as well as funding travel for Joel and Reiss Noel during the past fifteen months, we liaise with Ricky regularly to see how we can assist over the course of the whole season.

Please get in touch with Alan Perry via the usual methods (01702 476 458 or alanperry4@hotmail.com) or download a form from our website, www.shrimperstrust.co.uk to make a pledge. You can monitor the total on the website, and after the 2-0 win at Barnsley, we had totalled £1906.85 in pledges.

Life Membership (total: 122)

There are now 122 Life Members of the Shrimpers Trust, with **Lee Baptist, Jack Braithwaite, Colin Harris** and **Stanley Jeeves** the latest to sign up. In fact, young Stanley is only a little over a month old, and was signed up by father Brian just days after his birth! If you are interested in becoming a Life Member, please contact Paul Yeomanson at info@shrimperstrust.co.uk or by meeting him at the stand in the Shrimpers Bar on any home matchday.

The Shrimpers Trust would like to welcome the following new members this month:

Michael Alexander, Terry Allen, Margaret Blyth, Trevor Blyth, Tracey Browne, Geoffrey Clampin, Graham Dorrington, Paul Emmings, Jason Galliano, Emma Garland, Lesley Hicks, Andrew Leyh, Paula Leyh, Neil McDonald, Julie Ovens, Gina Perryman, Scott Potter, Michelle Reid, Chris Richards, Hayley Sobol, Donna Stone, John Taylor, Paula Tilson, James Wakeling and Michael Watts.

THE NEWS – Away From Home

Football Fans United – No Away Fans Ban

Cardiff City supporters and the Football Supporters Federation instigated a peaceful protest in Wolverhampton to bring to attention the banning of Bluebirds fans from Molineux. The decision was taken after incidents involving the two clubs last season, but penalised genuine Cardiff supporters who had no intention of causing any trouble.



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FSF chairman Malcolm Clarke joined the protestors, stating: *"We believe this decision is wrong because it punishes innocent fans, and that it is counter-productive because it turns law-abiding fans against the police and the authorities. The line should be drawn between the hooligans on the one side and everybody else on the other. This decision puts the ordinary innocent Cardiff City fans on the wrong side of the line."*

Cardiff City supporters' club vice-chairman Vince Alm added, *"We're absolutely determined to travel up to the Black Country to make our point. We'd much rather be going up for the game but there it is. We can only hope that by making our stand as we are that neither we nor the supporters of any other club will have to suffer such bans. One thing we've made quite clear is that this is to be a peaceful demonstration. We want nobody travelling up from Wales to cause trouble. They nor trouble-makers from elsewhere are welcome."*

THE MATCHES – Blues In Review

fri 15 dec: luton town (a) d0-0 (championship)

Freddy Eastwood spurned the chance to give United a first away win of the season when he rounded goalkeeper Dean Kiely in the last minute, only to hit the post from an acute angle in front of the SKY television cameras. Earlier, the mercurial front man struck the crossbar with a fierce effort from the edge of the penalty area.

Other than those two efforts, the match was largely forgettable, with Luton one of the poorest sides to have come up against Southend this season. It did feature a 25-minute rendition of 'Blue Army', the forerunner to the much-praised 'Ring Of Fire' chant at Oakwell in early January.

wed 20 dec: tottenham hotspur (a) 10-1 [aet] (carling cup quarter-final)

It seemed like an eternity – and it was actually six weeks – between the Fourth Round win against Manchester United and Southend's next clash with Premiership opposition, but when it did come around, the Shrimpers again didn't disappoint. Spurs fielded a strong side for a competition that they will believe that they can win, and Blues matched them.

Egyptian forward Mido struck the crossbar when the hosts did penetrate the Shrimpers back-line, but those occasions were few and far between, and when they did get through, Darryl Flahavan was on hand to deny them, with one majestic one-handed save in the final minute of normal time that topped anything that he did against the Red Devils.

Blues had their chance to score with a little over fifteen minutes of the ninety left when Efe Sodje saw his header drop agonisingly wide of the far post with Freddy Eastwood unable to stretch onto the ball. Then, with just five minutes separating the Championship and Premiership sides from penalty kicks, Jermain Defoe converted Dimitar Berbatov's low cross from an offside position to give Tottenham a fortuitous 1-0 win.

sat 23 dec: birmingham city (h) 10-4 (championship)

The only real blip in the past six weeks was a 4-0 thrashing administered by top of the table Birmingham City. The Blues from the West Midlands stamped their authority on the game from the very start – not least as Lee Bradbury was studded on the ground in the lead-up to DJ Campbell's unstoppable shot.

Stephen Clemence added a second just seven minutes before half-time, and after a similar period had passed in the second half, Gary McSheffrey caressed a left-footed free-kick from 20 yards into the bottom left-hand corner. Disillusioned Blues brought in Christmas by allowing Tunisian defender Radhi Ja'idi to head in a corner.

tue 26 dec: norwich city (a) d0-0 (championship)

Referee Andy Hall's ridiculous decision to give Efe Sodje a red card early in the second half ruined a great chance for Freddy Eastwood-less Southend to get a vital away win. Instead,



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threadbare Blues had to settle for a share of the spoils, even though they dominated proceedings with just ten men.

Arnau Reira made what would turn out to be his only start in a Southend shirt and battled away manfully, but it was Jamal Campbell-Ryce that was the most effective for United, constantly bursting down the right flank and crossing for Matt Harrold and Lee Bradbury. Peter Clarke and Lewis Hunt in particular at the back defended stoutly, and it was telling of the progress that Clarke has made that Championship top goalscorer Robert Earnshaw was kept quiet.

Harrold and Bradbury were both marginally off target as they attempted to get telling touches to vicious crosses, but Sodje's sending off for a late challenge on Dickson Etuhu ultimately cost Blues the opportunity to force the issue, though it did not dampen Shrimpers spirits, and Kevin Maher could have nicked it at the end for the away side with a low shot that was well saved.

sat 30 dec: coventry city (a) d1-1 (championship)

At a wet Ricoh Arena, United recorded another welcome away point, once again looking as though they deserved more from a committed display. At half-time, though, there was nothing to suggest that Coventry were not going to get an important three points for their then boss, Micky Adams.

Darren Currie's corner found its way to Elliott Ward, who was allowed to poke in just twelve minutes in, and United's only sight of goal was a long-range effort from Alan McCormack that slid underneath Andy Marshall and all but crossed the goalline. Mark Gower got the equaliser, a strong shot with his left foot after a typically important save from Darryl Flahavan, and Adam Barrett could have registered a second when his thunderous header bounced back off of the crossbar.

mon 01 jan: west bromwich albion (h) w3-1 (championship)

A New Year, the start of what promised to be a very important six months for Southend United Football Club, and what a way to kick things off. Jamal Campbell-Ryce had been in sumptuous form over the Christmas period, and he shone in a first half performance that would have made the good folk of Luton, west London and Hull sit up, let alone Barnsley and Leeds.

A new training routine before the game, in which all the forwards and midfielders took pot-shots from the edge of the penalty area against youth-team goalkeeper Joe Welch, worked wonders as JCR found the net with two wonderful strikes. It took only eleven minutes for him to get off the mark, collecting the ball on the halfway line and then running 40 yards before connecting sweetly with a dipping shot from 25 yards out.

He added to that on the half-hour with a similarly precise effort, a half-volley which arrowed into the same bottom left-hand corner. And if that was not enough, Blues made it 3-0 just before half-time when the short corner routine saw Mark Gower cross for Lewis Hunt to head home at the back post. John Hartson pulled back one goal midway through the second period, but the new-look solid Shrimpers back-line made sure that there were no scares.

sat 06 jan: barnsley (h) d1-1 (f.a. cup third round)

An incredible goal in the fourth minute of stoppage time from Michael Coulson allowed Barnsley a second bite at the F.A. Cup cherry amidst a deluge in southeast Essex. Coulson was clearly shown by television footage to have been in an offside position when Darryl Flahavan saved from Sam Toggwell, and then at the very least bundled the Blues custodian, as well as the ball, into the back of the net.

It was much more than the Tykes warranted as Southend did everything but add to the 58th minute lead given to them when Mark Gower touched Freddy Eastwood's free-kick past Nick Colgan. Lee Bradbury saw a header beat the 'keeper but stop in the mudbath of a penalty area before crossing the line, and Gower should have done better than hit his shot straight at Colgan. Had Gower not scored when he did, the heavy rain surely would have seen the referee call the fixture off – that he didn't ensured that we enjoyed an eventful last half-an-hour.



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sat 13 jan: cardiff city (a) w1-0 (championship)

It was ten months coming, but finally, at Ninian Park of all places, Southend United recorded an away win. The signs were in place given the recent away performances at Norwich City and Coventry City, but the game was still there to be won, and although the Bluebirds had not won in eleven (including eight draws), they had kept four consecutive clean sheets and drawn with Premiership Tottenham Hotspur a week earlier.

United were largely on the back foot in the opening stages, so it came as some surprise when Freddy Eastwood's knock-down was half-volleyed into the top right-hand corner by Lee Bradbury. It was a goal that befitted a hard-working professional still capable of doing an excellent job at Championship level, and massive reward for weeks of toil.

Cardiff should have equalised when Glenn Loovens shaved the top of the crossbar just before the break, and Darryl Flahavan in particular had to be aware throughout the second period. He denied Andrea Ferretti and the dangerous Peter Whittingham before the former hit the crossbar from an acute angle, but had that gone in it would have been unjust on the Shrimpers.

tues 16 jan: barnsley (a) w2-0 (f.a. cup third round replay)

A few hundred Southend supporters made the unwanted trip to Oakwell with some trepidation after a dreadful visit to South Yorkshire just a couple of months previously in the League. I won't deny that I did not for one minute actually want to go there, but when we arrived, it quickly became a different story.

The four subsidised coaches worth of support, plus those who made their own way to the ground, gave United unbelievable support, culminating in at least twenty minutes of chanting Johnny Cash's 'Ring of Fire' and a largely topless conga round the massive North Stand.

In return, the Shrimpers refused to be lowered to Barnsley's woeful standard of play and progressed to the fourth round of the F.A. Cup thanks to a stunning 23rd minute goal from captain Kevin Maher, a searing strike from the edge of the penalty area, and Lee Bradbury's excellent turn and shot after Alan McCormack had tirelessly chased the ball down. Darryl Flahavan still had to save from Martin Devaney and Michael Coulson while the scores were close, but Blues deservedly progressed.

sat 20 jan: derby county (h) 10-1 (championship)

It would be very tempting to put this first defeat in seven solely down to the ineptitude of the referee. There was little wrong, however, with Steve Howard's first half header for the visitors from the official's point of view, though Steve Tilson will be disappointed by the lack of marking.

The first half was probably shaded by Derby, who went in one-up, but Blues pummelled the County goal in the second period and were extremely unfortunate not to force at least an equaliser. Peter Clarke hit the inside of a post from a header and Freddy Eastwood, Alan McCormack and Jamal Campbell-Ryce were a constant threat going forwards, at times raining shots in on Stephen Bywater's goal.

The Shrimpers would have been able to sense that it was not going to be their day when Matt Oakley was not cautioned, despite committing three blatant fouls inside a minute of coming on as a substitute. However, no-one in the ground could believe their eyes when Southend's own replacement, Matt Harrold, had his shirt almost tugged off of his back in the penalty area and the referee waved play on – what was worse was that the same thing happened again just a minute later!

Up the Shrimpers!
Rob Craven (21 January 2007)