



SHRIMPERS TRUST

NEWSLETTER – Volume 2 Issue 22



THE INTRODUCTION – Editor Robert Craven

I'm reminded at the moment about a phrase that one of my friends at secondary school used: "If you don't expect anything, then you won't be disappointed," he told me.

It struck me that this was quite profound, especially as I only attended a local comprehensive, this was hardly Harrow or Eton. It also felt largely pessimistic.

I'd much rather be a dreamer, wondering about what can be achieved, even if it is nowhere near plausible. It has always come as part of the territory of being a Southend United, and of watching Essex County Cricket Club as well. You just can't afford to be too realistic.

But the last month has left me thinking that maybe my mate had a point, such has been the start to the Shrimpers 2007/8 season.

A large dose of perspective is required from all quarters. For a start, at the time of writing, in seven competitive matches, Blues have won three, lost three and drawn one (losing, admittedly disappointingly, to Dagenham & Redbridge in a penalty shoot-out in the latter).

That is hardly the form of champions, but it is not the sort of trot that is going to see the football club relegated either. So predictions of flying all the way back down to Coca-Cola League Two are slightly wide of the mark.

That is not to say that there are not areas that supporters should not be worried about. Defensively, Southend have looked shaky, and there is a distinct lack of height in the side. In those seven matches, United have kept two clean sheets, but equally have shipped four at Leeds United and three at Brighton & Hove Albion.

Football matches are not decided after eighty minutes, but if Blues' games were, then the Shrimpers would be sitting pretty in fifth place, below Leyton Orient on goal difference. Come to think of it, Leeds would have even fewer than the minus three points that they hold now.

It would put a massively different context to the results that the club have recorded thus far. And fans would be looking upwards to the Championship rather than nervously over their shoulders.

The issue at the heart of this is that Southend have conceded far too many goals in the last five to ten minutes than they should have done, whether through a lack of concentration, fitness or plain bad luck.

But it also shows how fickle all football fans are, not just at Roots Hall, but across the country. Manchester City fans have suddenly started espousing the virtues of Sven Goran Eriksson – a few months ago they were bombarding radio phone-ins with rants of opposition to the former England boss' appointment.

This season seems to have been particularly bad for this early proliferation of points and tables being published across the country.

The latest standings seemed to be printed after the opening weekend as though they would act as some kind of pointer towards who will be holding trophies aloft in May 2008.

However, as an article in *Seagull*, the Brighton programme, pointed out, none of the promoted clubs from Coca-Cola League One last season – Scunthorpe United, Bristol City or Blackpool – were even in the play-off places after four matches.

Remember the wretched start we endured ourselves in our League Two promotion season, bottom after the fifth match, a 2-1 defeat on a Friday night at Bristol Rovers. Who thought then that Southend would be the toast of Cardiff nine months later?

So yes, there are problems – at the moment no-one appears to be able to step up to the mantle of being leading goalscorer, and we have conceded a lot of poor goals. But there is still plenty of time for these creases to be ironed out.

In the words of the character Corporal Jones in *Dad's Army*: "Don't Panic!" Not for a little while anyway.

It was no surprise at all when I learnt that Southend United's chief executive, Geoffrey King, wanted to write to me after the last edition of the *Shrimpers Trust Newsletter*.

Actually, I was very pleased that he was willing to give his time to respond to some of the issues that I raised last time out, and he has very



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graciously allowed parts of his letter be reproduced so that I can at least show Shrimpers Trust members the Club's point of view following the pre-season friendly against West Ham United.

Pricing was one of the major issues that persuaded supporters not to attend the match. Mr. King very correctly commented: *"If the prices are set too high then a small attendance results and after expenses the Club makes a loss. Equally if the prices are too low a similar result could be achieved. In either case the position would be unacceptable as the Club is here to make profits for reinvestment..."*

Herein lies the problem – at numerous Centenary Committee meetings, it was agreed that the Centenary should not be a profit-making exercise; instead it should merely break even.

Mr. King continues: *"During the 05-06 season [we were] unable to get a Premier side to play at Roots Hall and it was decided to try again for the 06-07 season. We did in fact secure a game and played against Portsmouth but the Trust felt that this was not prestigious enough..."*

This is true, and the Trust's stance was based on the evidence of supporters' reactions on various website forums and from our own conversations with supporters. However, we also reiterated that West Ham United was an unacceptable proposition for fans – I think most people would have accepted Pompey had it been a straight choice between the two.

Mr. King was at pains to state that the Club used its database initially to sell tickets to Southend supporters, and that there was no trouble between supporters of Milton Keynes Dons and West Ham or Leyton Orient and West Ham.

Whilst all this is true, it misses the point that the high pricing of tickets prevented Southend supporters buying seats, and thus allowed more West Ham United supporters into the ground for a match that was supposed to celebrate Southend United's Centenary. This was not just another pre-season fixture.

I have also written a letter to Mr. King in response to again explain the stance that I took in the last *Newsletter*, but nonetheless am grateful to him for taking the time to write.

There were a couple of extremely positive points in Mr. King's correspondence. Blues' other home

pre-season clash against Vitesse Arnhem was a success on all fronts it seems:

"Vitesse Arnhem was an arranged match which as it turned out was very entertaining and showed SUFC in a good light and has brought some further interest from Vitesse in playing again next year," Mr. King writes.

Along with the excellent links that Ricky Duncan has built with the various youth set-ups across the continent, it seems that Southend United are gaining an excellent reputation across Europe and that these links may be starting to bear fruit: witness the capture of Frederik Ljungström, the 16-year-old forward from AIK Solna.

Mr. King also adds that, *"If you want to interview either me or members of staff about any particular issue we would welcome a call."* This is something that I hope will bear fruit in the future and that you, the members, will be able to see this in further editions of the *Newsletter*.

The Centre of Excellence continues to go from strength to strength, although competitive results in the first couple of matches have been a little disappointing.

They will surely pick up, and remember that you can follow the progress of the youth team on these very pages as well as on our website, www.shrimperstrust.co.uk.

The first Shrimpers Trust SUFC Youth Team Player of the Month will be revealed at the start of October, so make sure you keep your eyes peeled to see who it is.

As well as the Shrimpers Trust donating £10,000 to the Centre of Excellence to sponsor the European Tour Programme, don't forget that the Club are also looking to raise money through the Blues Lottery, and leaflets for this scheme are readily available. The first few winners were announced on the Club's official website, www.southendunited.co.uk, over the last few days.

It was very sad recently to hear the news about Ray Jones, the Queens Park Rangers and England youth international forward.

Southend supporters may remember Jones as the man who bundled Darryl Flahavan over for QPR's second goal at Loftus Road at the start of the 2006/7 season, but he was an 18-year-old of some potential.



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With that death announced just days after the horrific murder of 11-year-old Everton supporter Rhys Jones on Merseyside, it was a period of time when football took a good long look at itself.

Ray Jones', who used to play youth team football in east London, team-mates all wore his name in their next home match following the incident.

Meanwhile, Everton's squad, led by Phil Neville, the captain, paid tribute to young Rhys by visiting the area that he had been killed in and Liverpool even came out to the Toffeemen's theme, Z Cars.

Despite the tragedy, it was a period where football, and footballers, were shown in a positive light.

Up The Shrimpers,

Rob

THE SHRIMPERS TRUST KIDS

Blues' Youths Under-18s Results

Sat 04 Aug | Pre-Season Friendly | Mildenhall Town (a) | W4-2 | Lindie, Henry 3

Match Report: http://www.shrimperstrust.co.uk/default.asp?page_id=341

Sat 11 Aug | Pre-Season Friendly | Barking Abbey Centre of Footballing Excellence (h) | W3-1 | Priest 2, Adeyinka | Match Report: http://www.shrimperstrust.co.uk/default.asp?page_id=345

Sat 18 Aug | Football League Youth Alliance | Luton Town (a) | D3-3 | Lindie 2, Forshaw

Match Report: http://www.shrimperstrust.co.uk/default.asp?page_id=348

Sat 01 Sept | Football League Youth Alliance | Brighton & Hove Albion (h) | L2-5 | Thurlbourne, Priest

Match Report: http://www.shrimperstrust.co.uk/default.asp?page_id=350

After a phenomenal pre-season campaign, Southend United's Under-18 side have stuttered at the start of the 2007/8 Football League Youth Alliance South-East Conference campaign, conceding eight goals in two matches in claiming a solitary point.

In the past two seasons, since Ricky Duncan returned to the club, the Under-18s have made a notoriously slow start to proceedings, and so it has turned out again this year, with a 3-3 draw at Luton Town being followed up by a 5-2 home defeat to Brighton & Hove Albion, ironically on the same day as Blues were beaten at the Withdean Stadium.

The last two pre-season matches passed by without any undue signs that the season would be tricky. Mildenhall Town's first-team provided excellent opposition for the more physical side of the game, and the Suffolk side's start to the Ridgeons League Premier Division season shows what an excellent effort the young Shrimpers put in by emerging 4-2 victors.

Duncan took 19 players to the Suffolk-Cambridgeshire border, and they were all needed on an energy-sapping day. Liam Harrold put the hosts in front after James Lindie had a header ruled out for an infringement as he collected Ben Nower's goal-kick to fire past Nathan McDonald. Blues worked out a game-plan well, and Lindie sprung the offside trap to collect Rhys Henry's pass and level.

Southend had won this fixture twelve months earlier, and Henry converted Peggy Lokando's intelligent pass to make it 2-1 on the half-hour. A minute after half-time Lindie set up Henry for another, and his ninth of pre-season arrived just before the hour mark, chipping in from Jamie Forshaw's assist. Matt Robinson pulled one back, but by then Blues had won through.

A home clash with Barking Abbey's Centre of Footballing Excellence came seven days later, further conditioning for the more robust challenges that would face the Shrimpers in the coming months. It seemed as though the task would be easy when Richard Priest scored after just seven minutes from a Dan Harvey cross, but just minutes later Barking were level thanks to a calm finish.

Southend did take control in the second of three thirds, and Henry and Lindie both blazed wide before Forshaw struck the woodwork. Priest slashed in at the far post after good work from Henry to make it 2-1, and with Forshaw denied again, it was left to Tashan Adeyinka to fire in from 20 yards.



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Luton provided tough opposition for the first fixture of the competitive season, and they were 2-0 ahead within 22 minutes in a mirror-image of the scoring a year earlier, when Blues took an early lead to eventually emerge 3-2 winners.

Henry had gone close but it was Ryan Charles that gave the Hatters the lead before Ashley Harrison-Barker doubled it with another fine finish. Henry and Forshaw combined to set up Lindie, and then the same pair were able to instigate an equaliser, with the Scottish Under-17s international the goalscorer. A quiet second half sprung to life when Charles netted to put Town back in front, but Johnny Herd sprinted down the left to cross for Lindie, who touched in his second of the morning to secure a share of the spoils.

Two weeks later after a Saturday off from fixtures, Blues returned to Boots & Laces, but the first home match of the season ended in disaster as, despite taking the lead twice, just like the first team, the hosts ended up on the wrong end of a 5-2 thrashing.

Luke Thurlbourne's deft finish from a Dan Harvey free-kick had put Southend in front, but Liam Upton levelled with an outstretched right boot. Priest now stepped up to deliver a fine 30-yard effort that left Brighton goalkeeper Pelling with no chance.

Unfortunately, the lead did not even last until half-time as first Danny Royce netted and then Harvey upended the goalscorer to allow Kane Wills the chance to make it 3-2 from the spot. United continued to fight as Ricky Duncan rang the changes during the second period, but Kane Louis and a second for Royce ensured that the Seagulls started the campaign in emphatic manner.

Blues now travel to Gillingham (September 8) before the Youth Alliance Cup Group section starts a week later, with seven matches to be completed over the next two months. The Shrimpers Trust would like to thank Mark O'Keefe for additional match information supplied over the past month.

Remember, the Shrimpers Trust have sponsored the Centre of Excellence to the tune of £10,000 over the next two years. We could not do this without our members' support, and the Quid-a-Goal scheme has already raised in excess of £5,000 over the past two seasons to allow us to help Ricky Duncan. To check on the progress of the Under-18 side and for further content, click onto www.shrimperstrust.co.uk

THE TRUST – What We've Done

Youth Team Player of the Year Award Renamed

Just days after the Shrimpers Trust Southend United Youth Team Player of the Year Award details were released in this Newsletter, the trophy was been renamed the Tom Grace Memorial Shield in memory of the Southend Junior Shrimper, who sadly died last month.

Tom, who was just 15-years-old, died suddenly after being diagnosed with a tumour having undergone routine surgery in a London hospital to rebuild a jawbone. Tom had successfully fought off cancer of the face, having been given the all-clear from Great Ormond Street Hospital.

An avid Southend United supporter and SJS member, Tom travelled on the Shrimpers Trust coaches to away fixtures. His death will stun all Shrimpers fans, and the Trust have conveyed their condolences to the family, having attended the funeral last week.

The Shrimpers Trust committee decided to remember Tom by renaming the newly-established SUFC Youth Team Player of the Year Award the Tom Grace Memorial Shield, and approached Tom's family, who were in full support of the move.

Head of Youth Ricky Duncan, speaking after the Under-18s 4-2 success at Mildenhall Town, echoed those sentiments: *"It is nice to have a name to the award, especially one that is linked to a young supporter who was of the same age as those who will be vying for this award. It gives the shield more credence."*



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However, Duncan added that he was disappointed that it occurred in such tragic circumstances. "It will be an honour for one of our young players to win this award," he declared. "I know that Tom was well-liked and had a passion for Southend United, so it is a real privilege. It is not the right circumstances, but it is really kind of Tom's family to allow us to rename this award, and it means that his memory will be maintained."

The inaugural winner of the Tom Grace Memorial Shield will be revealed in May 2008, when one youth-team performer of eight monthly winners will be presented with the award at the Shrimpers Trust End of Season Review night.

Shrimpers Trust Events List

Quiz Night

Venue: The Shrimpers Bar, Roots Hall | Date: Saturday 13 October 2007 | Time: 7:30 p.m. for an 8:00 p.m. start | Admission: £8 adults, £5 concessions (includes fish-and-chip supper) | Contact: Alan Perry on 01702 476 458 or at alanperry4@hotmail.com

Teams consist of eight people each, but individuals or smaller groups can be accommodated if contact is made in advance. A choice of suppers from The Fish House are available, including fish, sausage, chicken, chicken nuggets or vegetarian options – please place your order with Alan as soon as possible. There will also be a fundraising raffle.

****STAR EVENT** Shrimpers Trust Annual General Meeting**

Venue: The Shrimpers Bar, Roots Hall | Date: Thursday 18 October 2007 | Time: 7:30 p.m. for an 8:00 p.m. start | Admission: Shrimpers Trust members only

The AGM of the Shrimpers Trust this year takes place on Thursday 18 October 2007. You can come along to the formal part of the meeting – further details will be forthcoming in the next edition of the *Shrimpers Trust Newsletter* – whilst afterwards we hope to have a guest speaker to answer your questions and give an insight into the Football Club. We hope to announce their identity soon, so keep clicking on www.shrimperstrust.co.uk for further information.

Race Night

Venue: The Shrimpers Bar, Roots Hall | Date: Saturday 17 November 2007 | Time: 7:30 p.m. | Admission: £3 (this event is by ticket only) | Contact: Paul Yeomanson at the Shrimpers Trust Stand or via PayPal via the website at www.shrimperstrust.co.uk.

The first Race Night of the 2007/8 season will take place on Saturday 17 November, on the evening of the Coca-Cola League One meeting with Cheltenham Town. If you are a local businessperson, why not sponsor a race? Contact Paul for further details. On the night, there will be further opportunities, other than simply betting on races, to win by becoming an owner.

****AVAILABLE NOW**:** The Team We Call United DVD

The Shrimpers Trust made 'The Team We Call United' DVD available last December, and copies have been selling well. However, there are still some DVDs to be bought, and if you would like a copy of the recording, which was made by the Bushell brothers in the late 1960s, please visit our website, www.shrimperstrust.co.uk or come to the Shrimpers Trust Stand in the Shrimpers Bar on a matchday next season.

****AVAILABLE NOW**:** Blues News Subscription Service

In late August, Southend United F.C. launched a new monthly newspaper dedicated to the Club. The publication features interviews, match reports, coverage of community schemes and a couple of articles penned by Robert Craven of the Shrimpers Trust.

The Trust are now making available a subscription service to the newspaper for our ex-patriot community across the world only. If you are interested in receiving the paper, please email info@shrimperstrust.co.uk (with *Blues News Subscription* in the header) with details of your name, address, country of residence and Shrimpers Trust membership number. We will then give you a quote for postage, packing and PayPal costs based on where you live. The newspaper costs £1, and the first issue, which was free, would be sent with Issue 2. For further information, please go to our website, www.shrimperstrust.co.uk.



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100 Club

Despite our support for the Club's Blues Lottery scheme, we are still desperately seeking further supporters of our own 100 Club scheme. By setting up a standing order for just £5 a month, you put yourself in with a chance of winning over £30 at the present time – and the more people that sign up, then the bigger the weekly prize.

2007/8 season winners are: Matt Eva, Phillip Conway, Zoe Cranmer and Trevor Bashford, all taking home £34. You can still join in and put yourself in with a chance of winning the bumper Christmas prize of ten times the usual weekly amount.

To register your interest, you can still contact Alan Perry at alanperry4@hotmail.com or by calling 01702 476 458 and put yourself in with a chance of winning the weekly prize. Remember, the more people that sign up to the scheme, then the higher the prize will be.

Quid-a-Goal

Quid-a-Goal is back for the 2007/8 season, and we are still welcoming any pledges that members would like to set up. The money raised from the scheme this season will be solely directed towards Ricky Duncan and the Centre of Excellence at Southend United. At the time of going to press, the Trust were just 25 pence short of £500 raised so far this season, a mark of how often the club's midfielders have managed to find the back of the net.

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 to make a pledge for the 2007/8 Quid-a-Goal campaign, of which further details will be available during the summer.

Life Membership (total: 135)

Only one new Life Member of the Shrimpers Trust this month, but a big welcome to **Mark Stoddard** nonetheless. If you are interested in joining Mark and 134 other Life Members, please contact Paul Yeomanson via email at membership@shrimperstrust.co.uk or by meeting him at the stand in the Shrimpers Bar on any home matchday during next season. Postal applications can be accepted via Shrimpers Trust, PO Box 5830, Southend-on-Sea, SS1 9FD.

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

Jonathon Andrews, Colin Ashby, Joshua Bambury, David Bishop, Sean Bishop, Jan Brown, Sean Caldwell, John Cooper, Derrick Davies, Shanie Daymond, Hayley Fewster, Karen Fewster, Richard Fox, Paul Franklin, Michael Gay, Matt Gilmore, Mark Groom, Luke Hall, Paul Houghton, Chris Jackson, Ken Jarvis, Lucy Kempen, Peter Kempen, Andrew Lench, Peter Ling, Keith Lockwood, Terry Meadows, Tracy Munro, Liam Noonan, Dean Overall, Martin Palmer, Sam Spooner, Allison Strachan, Richard Tanner, Stephen Toms, Alec Trott, Eric Weller, Bradley Weston, Neil Wheeler, Alex White and Andrew Young

Full Minutes of the Trust's Liaison Meetings with Southend United are available to download from the Shrimpers Trust website, www.shrimperstrust.co.uk. The archive goes right back to the very start, in September 2002, and includes meetings right up to July 2007

THE MATCHES – Blues In Review

weds 01 aug: vitesse arnhem (h) w3-2 (pre-season friendly)

After the hastily-arranged pre-season trip to Bermuda a year earlier, this was a chance for Southend United supporters to taste some continental football at Roots Hall. Dutch side Vitesse Arnhem were the opposition, four days after the 3-1 defeat to West Ham United, and it is interesting to note that after three matches they led the Dutch Eredivise, that country's version of the Premiership.

It was perhaps ironic that against European opponents, it should be someone called Fred Benson that put Arnhem in front, taking toll of some poor defending from a corner (don't let anyone tell you that friendlies are meaningless!). Vitesse were equally undone by a flag-kick, though, with Jamal Campbell-Ryce, a Jamaican, providing the cross for Zoltan Liptak, a Hungarian, to power a header home.



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The second half began with Blues being stunned on the break, new loanee Kerrea Gilbert caught out and allowing Santi Kolk to beat Darryl Flahavan. However, United showed some resilience in fighting back again, Campbell-Ryce forcing a parry that Richie Foran tucked in on the rebound. Quickly Lee Bradbury added a simple third after fine work from Gary Hooper, but it was Arsenal youngster Gilbert's contribution that was most pleasing in an attacking sense, rifling in a shot that cannoned back off of the crossbar.

sat 04 aug: crawley town (a) w2-1 (pre-season friendly)

A real rarity in that this was a match that I didn't attend on account of the fact that I went to the Under-18s pre-season encounter at Mildenhall Town instead. Judging by the reports that my friends at the game gave me, I probably made the correct decision. On the hottest day of the year, tempers flared after left-back Steven Hammell was savagely mown down, an injury that has left him on the sidelines since.

Former Colchester United midfielder Thomas Pinault irked Richie Foran when he lashed out at Alan McCormack, and the one-time Carlisle United supported his countryman by fighting back. With both teams down to ten men, there was more space to exploit, and Gary Hooper gave Blues the lead before Nicky Bailey collected Lee Bradbury's pass to make it 2-0. There was to be no clean sheet, however, as Magno Vieira beat Darryl Flahavan.

mon 06 aug: chelmsford city (a) w4-3 (pre-season friendly)

The Shrimpers concluded their pre-season campaign with a trip to early Ryman League Premier Division favourites Chelmsford City. The Clarets, along with fellow Essex club Billericay Town, narrowly missed out on promotion to the new Blue Square South Division, and with Jeff King in charge, presented a very difficult task for what was virtually a reserve team.

Mikkel Anderson, a young goalkeeper from Reading, was playing as a trialist between the sticks but virtually his first act was to pick the ball out of the back of the net after Bertie Brayley had smashed an unstoppable 30-yard drive into the corner of his goal. Richie Foran won a debatable penalty a quarter-of-an-hour later, and Lee Bradbury ensured that United were on level terms after 20 minutes.

Kezie Ibe, a trialist with Southend a few years ago before settling at Canvey and now City, scrambled the hosts back in front and Anderson also tipped a header onto the crossbar as United struggled, but winger Tommy Black changed the game with two goals in quick succession during the second half. His first saw the ex-Crystal Palace man burst into the box before sliding past Richard McKinney and the second was a fine finish after turning his marker to convert a Bradbury centre. Jason Hallett restored parity, but Charlie MacDonald's smart finish saw Blues come out of a seven-goal thriller marginally the better.

sat 11 aug: leyton orient (h) 11-2 (league one)

I think we've all got pretty used to the drill when it comes to Leyton Orient now – Southend United very rarely emerge victorious against the O's, and wins at Roots Hall, if anything, are even more infrequent. But still United looked set to steal a point despite Orient midfielder Sean Thornton duping referee Barry Knight and helping Alan McCormack collect his first red card of the season.

McCormack is no saint, but Thornton's play-acting was enough to see the Irishman pick up a second yellow card within an hour of the season getting underway and leave the Shrimpers a man down for the last half-an-hour. How different it had all looked some 30 minutes earlier when Mark Gower ghosted in at the far post to convert McCormack's excellent right-wing cross.

At that stage it was all Southend, but a free-kick, won by - guess who? – Thornton, saw the former Sunderland and Doncaster Rovers playmaker expose Darryl Flahavan's defensive wall and find the top corner of the goal. Gary Hooper, once an O's loanee, and Wayne Gray, the man responsible for securing the League One title at home to Bristol City fifteen months earlier, exchanges chances where they should have done better at either end, but with seconds left Efe Echanomi's cross was tapped in by Adam Boyd and the east Londoner's went home happy.

Match in a sentence: Cheery O's pick up predictable late win

tues 14 aug: cheltenham town (h) w4-1 (carling cup first round; after extra time)

Steve Tilson rang the changes for the match against the Robins as Steve Collis, Franck Moussa, Nicky Bailey and Lee Bradbury were all given an opportunity to impress. Largely, those selected did, and the performances of Moussa, the Belgian Under-19 international, and Bailey, a summer signing from Barnet, augured well for the season and years ahead.



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For 70 minutes, Southend dominated this fixture. Lee Bradbury nodded Blues in front after just 11 minutes, but a lack of chances created meant that United did not add to their lead. After a particularly heavy spell of pressure, Che Wilson surrendered possession on the edge of the Town penalty area and Sosthene Yao raced away to set up John Finnigan for an equaliser. Cheltenham piled on the pressure in the closing stages, and a penalty kick for an innocuous challenge four minutes into injury time looked to have cost the Shrimpers dear.

Collis guessed correctly though to beat out Finnigan's spot-kick, and the match entered an additional thirty-minute period, which Bradbury took by the scruff of the neck after Adam Barrett had put United back in front. The former Portsmouth forward nodded against the crossbar, then sent Shane Higgs the wrong way from the penalty spot before firing in his third of the evening in the second period of extra time.

Match in a sentence: Collis and Bradbury unlikely heroes of evening drama

sat 18 aug: leeds united (a) 11-4 (league one)

No-one who was at Elland Road on 18th August will know quite how Southend lost this match, let alone lose it 4-1. Trailing to Alan Thompson's third-minute free-kick (placed in almost exactly the same corner of the net as Thornton's seven days earlier), United battled hard to get back into the game. Alan McCormack struck the inside of the post with a long-distance effort, but remarkably the ball stayed out and rolled along the line.

If that was the best of the first half, the Shrimpers deserved even more from the second, Darryl Flahavan making the obligatory string of fine saves to keep the club in the match and then watching as Adam Barrett burst forward to bundle the ball over the line following an excellent build-up involving Mark Gower, Nicky Bailey and McCormack.

Barrett again had a chance but stabbed wide, and the introduction of Norwegian international Tore Andre Flo proved the difference. Garry Richards was brought on to counter the former Chelsea man's height, but he succeeded only in nodding into his path, and Flo volleyed spectacularly in. Rui Marques followed up with a header and Jermaine Beckford completed the quick-fire rout in front of a frenzied crowd.

Match in a sentence: Leeds go with Flo to inspire goal glut

sat 25 aug: millwall (h) w1-0 (league one)

A workmanlike performance from the Shrimpers helped them avert a Club record fifth straight home defeat and gave Blues their first League points of the season. The victory came after a tetchy first half, with the main action off the field as the baying Millwall contingent headed towards West Stand's 'W' Block. Eventually stopped, first by stewards and then the police, their hurling of seats could easily have been a display of boredom at matters on the pitch.

The main talking point was Jamal Campbell-Ryce's omission, and news reached Roots Hall that he was at Oakwell watching prospective new club, Barnsley. It mattered not as Nicky Bailey slotted in on the right-hand side of midfield, allowing Steve Tilson to field perhaps his best four players, Bailey, Kevin Maher, Alan McCormack and Mark Gower.

The only goal of the game came in a purple 20 minute patch for the hosts as Che Wilson's left-wing cross was looped over the lead of Chris Day in the Lions goal by Bailey's well-weighted header. Gower, substitute Tommy Black and new boy Charlie MacDonald all threatened, but in the end Southend held on to secure the win.

Match in a sentence: Lions tamed as Bailey proves the difference

tues 28 aug: wafford (h) w2-0 (carling cup second round)

Watford, relegated from the Premiership in 2006/7, travelled to Southend United, relegated from the Coca-Cola Championship, to see if they could continue a useful start to the season. Instead, a team of youngsters and fringe players were beaten by Blues own mix-and-match selection.

United thought that they were ahead after 15 minutes, but Adam Barrett's header was chalked off for offside, and the homesters had to endure a long period of pressure from the Hornets, who won corner after corner. The Shrimpers defence, bolstered in height by Simon Francis and Garry Richards, coped well enough, although Darryl Flahavan had to be brave to stop Tamas Priskin on more than one occasion.

The deadlock was broken by Charlie MacDonald, who scored a fine goal, guiding the ball low into the net after a defence-splitting pass from young Franck Moussa. The impressive teenager was again involved shortly after half-time in United's second, a flicked pass setting up MacDonald for an unselfish pass to strike partner Matt Harrold, who tucked home easily. More corners rained in, but Flahavan kept his 88th clean sheet of his Southend career, a new Club record.

Match in a sentence: Strikers finally off the mark in surprisingly comfortable success



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sat 01 sept: brighton & hove albion (a) 12-3 (league one)

With a little over five minutes left in this game, Southend looked set to record their first away win since that famous Easter Monday afternoon at Preston North End. The introduction of Bas Savage turned the match on its head, and with Steve Tilson deciding not to bring on Garry Richards to counter his height, the tall target man twice set up both Nicky Forster to help the Seagulls to victory.

Alan McCormack gave United the lead in another lacklustre opening period, where former Southend trialist Alex Revell should have done better with two unmarked headers, nodding one wide and another onto the left-hand post. McCormack stunned the hosts when his effort from just outside the penalty box crept past Michael Kuipers.

Southend looked comfortable, but then Savage came on, and his downward header was helped over the line by Forster. Just minutes later, Blues were back in front, though, as Kevin Maher chipped the ball into the path of Nicky Bailey for the former Barnet man to score. However, Savage then beat Kerrea Gilbert to set up Forster again, and with just seconds left, Hammond struck from a corner to leave a sizeable Shrimpers contingent bemused and angry.

Match in a sentence: Big man Bas Savages sorry Shrimpers

tues 04 sept: dagenham & redbridge (h) d2-2 (johnstone's paint trophy first round; dagenham & redbridge win 7-6 on penalties)

After over 30 penalties netted in succession in shoot-outs and during normal time, Southend's luck from 12 yards deserted them as they went down to local rivals Dagenham & Redbridge in the first ever competitive meeting between the two sides. That the game ever got that far when Dagenham struggled with just ten men for the final 20 minutes through injury and recorded just two or three shots was incredible.

Richie Foran, in his first start of the season, gave United the lead after Nicky Bailey's precise through-ball, but Matt Harrold, Adam Barrett and Leicester City loan signing Eric Odhiambo all should have added to the advantage in a comfortable first half. Blues were punished when Sam Saunders found the back of the net with a speculative bicycle kick early in the second period.

Tommy Black provided the pass for Alan McCormack to rifle in at the near post for Blues' second on what was largely an abject display from the former Preston midfielder, and after Charlie MacDonald had failed three times to beat Tony Roberts and Marcus Okuonghae on the line, Chris Moore was allowed to level.

That sent the game to an immediate penalty shoot-out with no extra time, and Steve Collis again gave Blues the chance to win when he denied Sam Sloma. McCormack blasted over at 4-3, and that allowed Daggers back in, with Lewis Hunt missing Blues' eighth spot-kick and Shane Huke taking advantage.

Match in a sentence: Penalty misery as visitors deliver late Dagger blow

Up the Shrimpers!

Rob Craven (5 September 2007)