

NEWSLETTER – Vol. 5 Iss. 04. – March 2010

THE INTRODUCTION – Paul FitzGerald

Good News anyone?

A colleague of mine is helping a friend collate some information on our club's season and asked me for input - I had to look at his request 3 times before I could think of anything positive. Our football club's chairman of course is always positive and dislikes having negativity around him...I mean imagine you hadn't been paid for 2 months – “good morning young poor person” – “oh er good morning Mr Chairman top of the morning to you”

Season Tickets - Have you bought yours yet? I've just got mine – not for the football, but for the journey to the high court.

Ok, enough of the attempt at humour – no seriously, I'm gonna cry soon if Ron's Easter Bunny doesn't appear soon.

With affairs on the pitch not much better than those off of it, we look to be destined for the good old 4th Division. A desperately disappointing result against Exeter, despite several decent performances (not least from our captain) leaves us in a perilous position.

As predicted by many, the club were unable to pay the Trust back the money loaned in December. As a result of this, the club asked for more time to pay and the Trust has agreed to an extension with a revised date target of April and a final repayment date of 30th June.

The original loan and indeed the extension has created a lot of feedback (not all positive) and I thought it worth explaining a little more of the circumstances behind the loan.

Members may remember the large payment made to HMRC in late 2009 – the Trust were aware soon after, that many local suppliers had not been paid and approached Ron Martin primarily to see if the supporters could help but not necessarily financially.

That approach developed into his request for a Loan and based on the “Help not Hinder” principle we agreed that we wanted to help and a potential agreement was drawn up. This was agreed by 100% of the committee via e-mail.

Nothing much happened for a while; until I got an "urgent" phone call on a Friday (I think our next game was Tuesday). You may remember we were previously in an Embargo situation and I think we had 10 first team players fit. Ron Martin was trying to clear the embargo and had come up short - so asked for help.

The Trust funds were used to help lift the embargo on that day. The loan was accompanied by a personal guarantee from Ron Martin – so that if the club were unable to pay the Trust back then Ron would. Borrowing money from supporters openly is a sensitive issue and I agreed to his request for this to be low key in announcement terms. Of course, Ron then announced it, alongside the separate issue (which he had agreed many months before) of the seat on the board (although



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he changed it from Operating Company to Football Club (Without telling us) - I favour Operating Company - maybe we'll get both - or none of course, who knows...!).

I did believe this was commercially sensitive personally, although I know that a lot of people are unhappy about the decision not to announce publicly. In addition, despite everything that has happened since, I still believe this was the right decision based on the situation at the time. Obviously subsequent events and the passage of time have made this information less sensitive.

I stand by the decision and acknowledge that it may turn out to be wrong and despite the agreement of all the committee originally, I will take the fall if necessary.

The extension to the loan was easier to explain because by then, of course, Ron had announced it (the extension by the way was not unanimous - although it was a very clear majority).

If any member wants to talk to me about any of this I am available match days in the Shrimpers Bar, can be contacted via the Trust Website or via pfitz666@aol.com. You will also get the chance to discuss matters with the committee at our forthcoming Members Open Meeting on Monday 12th April, details of which can be found later in this Newsletter.

SHRIMPERS TRUST PLAYER OF THE MONTH - FEBRUARY

MATTHEW PATTERSON

£50.00 Donation to **Little Havens Hospice**



Presented by SJS Members Thomas & Daniel March

FUNDRAISING

100 Club

The latest winners in the scheme, pulled out of the hat during weekly draws since the last newsletter were Paul Manning, Lorraine Posnack, Dave Barlow, Alec Trott, Graham Hilder, Zoe Cranmer, Chris Karkoski.

The nature of the 100 Club means the more people that sign up, then the bigger the weekly prize. 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 that prize will be. By setting up a standing order for just £5 a month (or just £60 a year), you put yourself in with a chance of winning over £31 per week at the present time.

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Quid-a-Goal

This Season's Quid A Goal scheme is now up and running and with numerous pledges made so far the current running total after 44 matches is **£1233.00**

For this season part of the funds raised from the QAG scheme will be given to the Southend United Community & Educational Trust (SUCET) to help fund their Bodycare Programme. This programme is delivered young children of both Infant and Junior school age to help them get a healthy start in life with the benefits of physical activity and healthy eating being covered as well as mental and social health.

If you would like to help raise funds for this worthy cause you can do so by visiting the Trust Info Stand in the Shrimpers Bar prior to any Home Game or by completing the form printed in this season's SUFC Match Day Programmes.

Application forms are also available for download from the Trust Website www.shrimperstrust.co.uk


End of Season Draw

You will have received several books of the Trust's End of Season Draw Tickets with this Newsletter. If you are able to sell them please do so and return the ticket stubs with the correct payment to: **End of Season Draw, The Shrimpers Trust, PO Box 5830, Southend on Sea, SS1 9FD.** Please make cheques payable to *The Shrimpers Trust*. Alternatively Ticket Stubbs can be returned to the Trust Info Stand in the Shrimpers Bar prior to any Home Game.

FANCY A FLUTTER

With the World Cup fast approaching lets take a look at the odds to win the tournament outright.

Some of you may have taken up the offer from the club that if you bought your season ticket early, your season ticket would be free if England wins the world cup, well let's see how our odds compare to the rest of the world.



Spain	9/2	Mexico	80
Brazil	5	Uruguay	100
England	5	South Africa	125
Argentina	9	Australia	125
Italy	12	Denmark	125
Germany	12	Greece	150
Holland	14	Switzerland	200
France	14	Slovakia	250
Ivory Coast	28	Slovenia	200
Portugal	28	Japan	250
Chile	40	South Korea	200
Paraguay	50	Algeria	250
Ghana	66	Honduras	750
Serbia	66	North Korea	2000
USA	80	New Zealand	1000

So England are in fact joint second favourites with only Spain more likely to lift the trophy than us. But where is the value ???

SHRIMPERS TRUST TIP : BACK IVORY COAST AS OUTSIDERS – WITH DROGBA FIRING ON ALL CYLINDERS ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE AND SHOULD THEY MAKE IT OUT OF THE GROUP OF DEATH, IVORY COAST COULD BE THE FIRST CONTENDERS FROM AFRICA.

Source: William Hill

MEMBERSHIP

Welcome to New Life Members (Total 186)

Tom Berry, Mrs J. Slade & Peter Thrush

If you are interested in joining this group please contact our Membership Secretary, Paul Yeomanson via email at membership@shrimperstrust.co.uk.

You can also join up as a Life Member in the Membership Section of the Trust Website www.shrimperstrust.co.uk, and postal applications will also be accepted at **Shrimpers Trust, PO Box 5830, Southend-on-Sea, SS1 9FD**.

Welcome to New Members since the last Newsletter

Connor Alp, Freya Barnard, Jill Barnard, Tom Berry, Jon Binns, Blake Dumbrill, Stephen Dumbrill, Nathan Gallop, Nigel Groves, Patrick Horgan, Dean Houldsworth, Elliott Hume, Oliver Ibrahim, Ravi Maini, Jonny Martin, Mark McClure, Christine Moses, Jacob Robinson, Jimmy Sears, Juliet Sheen, Charlie Smith, David Wallen and Tracey Wooderson.

Please note that the Shrimpers Trust would like to know if any of its members' addresses change, or if they have a new email address so that newsletters and other correspondence can be sent to the correct address. Please send any change of address details to **The Shrimpers Trust, PO Box 5830, Southend-on-Sea, SS1 9FD, or alternatively fill in our on-line contact details form which can be found in the Membership Section of the Trust Website, www.shrimperstrust.co.uk **

FORTHCOMING TRUST EVENTS

Monday 12th April 2010

MEMBERS OPEN FORUM

Your chance to discuss recent issues surrounding the Trust and the Club with Members of the Trust Committee

The Shrimpers Bar, Roots Hall – 8 pm

For further details contact Paul Yeomanson

(Tel: 01702 302373, email: info@shrimperstrust.co.uk)

Saturday 17th April 2010

QUIZ NIGHT

The Shrimpers Bar, Roots Hall – 7.15pm for a 7.45pm prompt start

For further details contact Alan Perry

(Tel: 01702 476458, email: alanperry4@hotmail.com)



Thursday 13th May 2010

SHRIMPERS TRUST POTY & SEASON REVIEW

The Shrimpers Bar, Roots Hall – 7.30pm for an 8.00pm prompt start

For further details contact Paul Yeomanson

(Tel: 01702 302373, email: info@shrimperstrust.co.uk)



WELCOME BACK DAVID WEBB AND GOOD LUCK PAUL BRUSH

Welcome back David Webb, it's always nice to have a familiar face back at the hall and hope everyone will get behind the club in our relegation battle.

Whilst it is always exciting when the Messiah returns, we at the Shrimpers Trust would like to thank Paul Brush for his services to the club over the past few years, where we have experienced some of the most exciting years of our history.

Cheers for the memories Paul and good luck for the future!



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WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

We are introducing a new feature for the newsletter: a chance to see how our former players are getting on - which ones are thriving, which ones are not...as well as news of transfers, gossip, etc.

League Table of Former Shrimpers still plying their trade at league or non-league level 2009/10

**Brackets* indicate when they played for Southend

Premiership

Cort, Stanislas and Kelly are the only regular players. Kelly got a cap against Brazil; George Friend has been loaned to Exeter, and Roy O'Donovan has been loaned to Hartlepool (see League One)

Leon Cort (2001-2004) - Burnley (moved from Stoke 27/1/2010) - 8 apps for Burnley

Dorian Dervite (2009) - Spurs, 0 apps

Stephen Kelly (2003) – Fulham - 19 apps, 1 red card.

Michael Kightly (2003-5) - Wolves - 10 apps

Femi Orenuga (2009) – Everton - has featured in at least 9 U18s matches for the Toffees just 16

Junior Stanislas - (2008-9) - West Ham - 4 goals in 22 apps

Robert Milsom (2008-9) – Fulham - 0 apps

Championship

Federici is doing well for Reading; as is Hooper at Scunthorpe. Flavahan and Collis are falling by the wayside. Braces for Clarke and Hooper.

Jamal Campbell-Ryce - (2005-7, 2 spells) - Bristol City - recently signed from Barnsley (19/1/2010). 17 apps for Barnsley, 6 for Bristol City

Leon Clarke - (2007-8) - Sheffield Wednesday - 5 goals in 28 apps

Steve Collis - (2006-8) - recently joined Bristol City – 0 apps - (25/1/2010), 1 appearance for Crewe this season

Freddy Eastwood (2004-7) - Coventry - 7 goals in 31 apps

Adam Federici - (2008) – Reading - 40 apps, 60 conceded, 8 clean sheets

Kerrea Gilbert (2007-8) - on loan to Peterborough from Arsenal - 6 apps at Peterborough

Mark Gower - (2003-8) – Swansea - 1 goal in 25 apps

Gary Hooper - (2006-8) – Scunthorpe - 13 goals in 32 apps

Chris Powell - (1990-6) - Leicester City - 3 apps, 0 goals

Hal Robson-Kanu (2008) – Reading - 14 apps, 0 goals

League One

Barnard starts scoring for Southampton, Harrold reaches double figures, as does McDonald. Paynter continues his scoring streak. Royce, Hunt and Johnson are no longer regular players.

A hat-trick for O'Donovan against us; two braces for both Barnard and Paynter, and braces for Ibehre and McDonald. Harding also scores the winner in a 1-0 win against Leeds.

Nicky Bailey - (2007-8) – Charlton - 12 goals in 39 games

Lee Barnard - (2008-10) - Southampton - 11 apps, 6 goals

Mark Bentley - (2004-6) – Gillingham - 35 apps, 2 goals

Peter Clarke - (2006-9) – Huddersfield - 5 goals in 42 apps, 1 red card

Daryl Flavahan- (2000-2008, 2 spells) - Crystal Palace - Loaned to Oldham - 9 apps for Oldham, 14 goals conceded, 2 clean sheets

George Friend (2009) - Wolverhampton Wanderers - 1 app in match at Old Trafford after 4 apps on loan to Scunthorpe United, now on loan at Exeter, 2 apps

Dan Harding (2008-9) – Southampton - 3 goals in 40 apps

Matt Harrold (2006-8) – Wycombe - 10 goals in 33 apps

Matt Heath (2009) - Colchester United, 17 apps, 0 goals

Lewis Hunt - (2003-8, 2 spells) - Wycombe, 22 apps

Jabo Ibehre - (2009) – Stockport – 2 goals in 8 apps

Leon Johnson (1998-2002) - Wycombe Wanderers - 8 apps

Nathan Jones (1997-2000) - Yeovil Town - 20 apps

Kevin Maher - (1998-2008) – Gillingham - 29 apps

Charlie Macdonald - (2007-8) – Brentford - 10 goals in 29 apps

Dean Morgan - (2007-8) - Milton Keynes Dons - 2 goals in 12 apps (also 1 goal in 2 apps on loan at Grays Athletic)

Roy O'Donovan (2009) – Sunderland - 0 apps, on loan to Hartlepool, 3 goals in 5 apps

Billy Paynter - (2006-7) - Swindon - 22 goals in 39 apps

Garry Richards - (2007-8) – Gillingham - 0 goals in 14 apps

Michael Ricketts - (2006) - left Tranmere Rovers by mutual consent on 21st January after 2 goals in 17 apps

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Simon Royce - (1991-8) – Gillingham - 21 apps, 27 conceded, 8 clean sheets

Theo Robinson - (2009) – Huddersfield - 9 goals in 32 apps

Lloyd Sam (2007) - Charlton Athletic - 4 goals in 36 apps

John White (2009) - Colchester United, 32 apps, 0 goals

League Two

Benson continues his good form, Broughton joins Lincoln on loan, Sawyer not playing regularly at Barnet, Sodje gets more bookings than hot dinners, and Clark Masters leaves the pro ranks and joins Hayes & Yeading on a free transfer. Thurgood hasn't played since 2009.

Brian Barry-Murphy - (2002) – Bury - 1 goal in 41 apps

Paul Benson - (1997) - Dagenham and Redbridge - 15 in 37 apps

Lee Bradbury - (2006-7) - AFC Bournemouth - 38 apps, 0 goals

Drewe Broughton - (2003-5) – Rotherham - 3 goals in 11 apps, now on loan at Lincoln, 7 apps 0 goals

Barry Conlon - (1998-9) – Grimsby - recently loaned to Chesterfield. 5 goals in 19 apps for Grimsby, 3 goals in 10 apps for Chesterfield

Leon Constantine - (2003-4) – Hereford - 7 goals in 30 apps

Liam Feeney - (2008) - AFC Bournemouth - 3 goals in 37 apps

Paul Furlong - (2008-9) – Barnet - 3 goals in 32 apps

Luke Guttridge - (2005-7) – Northampton - 5 goals in 26 apps

Clark Masters - (2008-9) - Aldershot - 2 apps

Lee Sawyer - (2008 and 2009, 2 spells) - Barnet, 1 goal in 7 apps

Efe Sodje - (2006-7, 2 spells) – Bury - 1 goal in 35 apps and an astonishing 11 yellow cards!

Stuart Thurgood - (2001-4) - Dagenham & Redbridge - 19 apps, 0 goals

Non-League Stats will be updated next issue

SHRIMPERS TRUST STATEMENT – 12th MARCH 2010

Shrimpers Trust Statement - 12th March 2010

The Shrimpers Trust is concerned about the future of Southend United FC despite the decision of the High Court to grant the Club an additional 35 days to settle the debt owed to Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs. Supporters have been repeatedly assured that the situation is in hand but the impending five-week period is sure to remain a worrying time until confirmation that the outstanding debt to HMRC has been paid and the Winding-Up Petition has been withdrawn.



At a recent meeting between members of the Shrimpers Trust's committee and SUFC Chairman Ron Martin, the Trust were informed that the delay in the repayment of a £60,000 loan was as a result of awaiting the concluding working capital investment to meet the Club's needs pending the move to a new stadium.

It is to be hoped that this will be completed before April 13th and that this will also free up the money to pay HMRC.

Meanwhile, the Trust urges all fans to back the team on the pitch with their utmost vocal support as we approach three crucial home matches within ten days in a bid to climb clear of the Coca-Cola League One relegation zone.

SUFC YOUTH TEAM ROUND-UP

As their first-team counterparts have also learnt, 2010 has been a testing time for Southend United's Under-18 side as they cling on to top spot in the Football League Youth Alliance South-East Conference by just a single point.

That situation was confirmed after a 4-0 reverse to second-placed Queens Park Rangers on 13th March. Blues' Youths were seemingly matching their West London opponents - who had claimed the Youth Alliance title for three years in succession ahead of Southend's triumph in 2008/9 - until the dismissal of winger Marcus Milner on the half-hour mark. Within five minutes Rangers were ahead, and they did not look back.

However, there was better news for Milner and many of his second-year scholarship colleagues within two days as six players were offered terms on which to stay with the Club in 2010/11. The former Leicester City trialist was joined by Jamie Dennis, Merrick James-Lewis, Ade Osifuwa and Duran Reynolds in being awarded a one-year development contract at Roots Hall, subject to acceptance. Harry Crawford, meanwhile, was offered a

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two-year professional contract with Blues having scored 11 goals this season and 16 in 35 starts during his Under-18s career.

At this time of year, there is always a downside, and that comes courtesy of defenders John Owinja and Callum Whittaker. For ex-Chelsea and Ipswich Town blocker Whittaker, the failure to earn a development deal must have been particularly disappointing having featured on the first-team bench this term, but all at the Shrimpers Trust wish the pair the best of luck for their future careers.

Meanwhile, the Under-18s (as well as the reserves and the first-team) have been hit by an injury to speedy striker Kyle Asante. The second-year faces up to a year on the sidelines having sustained cruciate ligament damage in a second-string fixture against Ipswich Town, with the Club continuing to monitor his recovery during this period.

On the pitch, in addition to the QPR reverse, Ricky Duncan's charges have suffered defeats to Brighton & Hove Albion and Wycombe Wanderers at home, whilst also edging out Barnet 1-0, with all three matches taking place at Boots & Laces.

Against Brighton, United were 3-0 down by the break and a further goal behind just seven minutes after the restart, rendering Asante's twelfth goal of the season a mere consolation before the Seagulls added their fifth to complete a 5-1 defeat.

Luke Chambers, a 15-year-old shotstopper signed from Arsenal, kept a clean sheet on his Under-18s debut against Barnet, with the only goal of the game coming courtesy of Crawford, who headed in Whittaker's left-wing cross seven minutes before half-time. It was then over to Chambers to impress with a string of fine saves to keep the Bees out, and he will expect further appearances with Daniel Bentley called up as understudy to Steve Mildenhall after the departure of Ian Joyce and injury to Kelvin Jack.

Finally, Wycombe Wanderers beat the teenage Shrimpers for the second time this season with a 2-1 League victory at the start of March. The Chairboys were ahead as early as the 14th minute, and added to their advantage from the penalty spot inside the dying minutes before Jamie Dennis' own penalty reduced the arrears in stoppage time.

10% DISCOUNT AT ELEMENTS RESTAURANT AT THE RENDEZVOUS CASINO



The Rendezvous Casino at the Kursaal

10% Discount in Elements Restaurant on production of Valid Membership Card

Offer must be mentioned at time of booking

The Rendezvous Casino at the Kursaal is Southend's one stop entertainment venue offering everything that you need for a great night out, all under one roof. A wide range of gaming to suit all levels of play with learn to play training tables and much more. The Rendezvous Ice Bar is the first bar in the UK, to use the Glycol system to guarantee ice cold beer. We also offer a wide range of cocktails and exciting drinks as well as a selection of light dishes and snacks.

The Fahrenheit Bar Live Lounge brings the best in top class live entertainment every Friday night with top tribute acts, vocalists and our resident DJ. The Club is also complemented with a first class a la carte restaurant (Elements Restaurant) offering an international selection of mouth watering cuisines. A private dining room is available and ideal for parties of up to 20 people. Each Monday Elements offers 'dine and dance' – 3 courses plus live entertainment for £13.99 pp.

Please see the website for full details: www.rendezvouscasino.com/southend

BARBER'S BLURB – TERRACE TALK MATCH REPORTS

Saturday 30th January 2010

Southend United 2-2 Swindon Town

Blues XI: Steve Mildenhall, Simon Francis, Jean-Yves M'Voto Owono, Adam Barrett, Pat Baldwin, Scott Malone, Franck Moussa, Jean-Francois Christophe, Anthony Grant, Francis Laurent and Scott Vernon.

Southend United scored twice in the final 5 minutes of the match to make sure they shared the spoils at Roots Hall. Swindon went two goals ahead inside the first ten minutes thanks to goals from former Blues striker Billy Paynter and hot-shot Charlie Austin.

The visitors started in electric fashion and took the lead inside 45 seconds in Essex. Kevin Amankwaah crossed the ball in from the right and the returning M'Voto was unable to get any contact on the ball and it fell to Billy Paynter who slotted home his 17th goal of the season from close range.

The Blues were not playing well at all but nearly leveled in the 5th minute. Simon Francis' perfect ball was controlled well by Laurent who chipped the ball over the last Swindon defender but his volley was just too high as it hit the top of the crossbar.

Despite this opportunity, the Blues did not continue in the same vein, and soon fell further behind in the 10th minute. New boy Pat Baldwin smashed the ball away in hope of clearing the danger but it hit Ferry and the ball fell to Charlie Austin and he placed the ball in the same corner as Paynter's earlier strike.

It was Laurent again who came the closest to getting the Blues back in the game. The Frenchman saw his 20 yard volley drift wide of the post after taking a deflection and this proved to be the only real clear cut opportunity of the first half.

Steve Tilson noted that the team needed changing and he did just that. He reverted back to the usual 4-4-2 with Spencer and Scannell replacing Moussa and M'Voto. Swindon continued to give the early pressure of the second half when Mildenhall saved well from Ward and Jean-Francois headed just over the crossbar.

Southend did get chances though and they fell to Laurent and Vernon. Francis Laurent did well down the left before cutting inside but his cheeky effort at the near post was saved well by Smith. The second chance fell to debutant Vernon but the long through ball to the Col U loanee just evaded him, as he could not get the ball under control.

Scott Spencer also had a few chances to score. His first effort was deflected wide and the second was a header from 8 yards, which he should have done better with if the truth be told.

With 5 minutes left to go Blues got a lifeline thanks to Scott Spencer's second goal in 4 Blues appearances. Simon Francis' free kick was saved well by Smith but the former Everton trainee reacted quickest to prod home from close range.

The Shrimpers continued to push forward and did equalise in the 89th minute thanks to centre half Pat Baldwin. Damian Scannell skipped past the right back and put an inviting ball into the area and Baldwin who guided it into the top corner.

Monday 8th February 2010

Colchester United 2-0 Southend United

Blues XI: Steve Mildenhall, Simon Francis, Jean-Yves M'Voto, Adam Barrett, Scott Malone, Sanchez Watt, Franck Moussa, Damian Scannell, Jean-Francois Christophe, Francis Laurent and Scott Spencer.

Journey: **7 out of 10.** After waiting half an hour for someone at Roots Hall, we made it to the ground on good time, and the traffic was not bad either.

Stadium: **6 out of 10.** Small stadium with very little atmosphere and half empty.

Food Quality/Service: **N/A.**

Programme: **6 out of 10.** Decent coverage of both teams and various interviews.

Performance: **7 out of 10.** A dominant performance but with no end product on a very terrible pitch.

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Southend United crashed to a 2-0 defeat at the hands of local rivals Colchester United in the Essex Derby. On a pitch, that may have not passed a Sunday League inspection, a goal in each half from Anthony Wordsworth gave the side from North Essex side an undeserved victory.

It was Colchester that took the lead in unfortunate circumstances. Big Clive Platt took advantage of M'Voto's slip to clip a ball across the unmarked Wordsworth who struck a weak effort that trickled past Mildenhall and it was set to be cleared by skipper Barrett but instead of clearing the ball to safety his feet got stuck in the sand and the ball went over the line at a very slow pace.

Southend were the much better side and nearly got back into the game when Laurent headed Damian Scannell's cross straight at Williams in the Colchester goal from the back post. It was an end-to-end game and Steve Mildenhall twice did well to deny the hosts when he blocked Odejayi's shot and turned away a cross-cum-shot from Marc Tierney.

It was then The Shrimpers turn for an effort on goal. Youngster Scott Spencer managed to get on the end of a low cross but his shot was scuffed and also took a touch of defender Matt Heath. Southend were getting on top and another chance fell to Laurent. The Frenchman outpaced John White but instead of cutting it back to the unmarked Spencer he went for goal only to find the side netting.

The second half continued in the same manner as Southend continued to dominate proceedings. Damian Scannell had a good run down the right hand-side and his cross made its way to Spencer whose effort was blocked by the Col U defence.

The Shrimpers hard work was all but ruined in the 62nd minute. David Prutton's corner was headed back across goal by Odejayi and was met by Wordsworth who tapped home from 4 yards out.

With 10 minutes to go Southend continued to attack and nearly got back into the match when Franck Moussa saw his 25 yard strike tipped around the post by Williams. The dominance from the South Essex side was nearly rewarded with a goal when Adam Barrett headed past Williams but the referee ruled it out wrongly for an apparent push in the box.

Saturday 14th February 2010

Southend United 1-1 Tranmere Rovers

Blues XI: Steve Mildenhall, Simon Francis, Jean-Yves M'Voto Owono, Pat Baldwin, Adam Barrett, Sanchez Watt, Franck Moussa, Jean-Francois Christophe, Damian Scannell, Francis Laurent and Scott Vernon.

Southend United could only manage a draw in the relegation six pointer against Tranmere Rovers at Roots Hall. Blues took the lead when Scott Vernon placed home a penalty but were pegged back thanks to Ian Goodison's close range poke.

With both teams looking to get the vital win to move away from trouble, the game was slow to start with. Southend got the first chance of the game to take the lead when former Blues trialist Zoumana Bakayogo in the box chopped down Francis Laurent. Scott Vernon stepped up from 12 yards to stroke home the penalty into the bottom right corner of the goal to give Blues a deserved lead.

The Shrimpers were playing the ball around beautifully without really creating any clear-cut chances to add to their lead. Franck Moussa saw his right-footed shot drift wide of the far post after Francis Laurent set him up. Tranmere were still hanging on and kept trying to hit Southend on the break, but they just could not break down the Blues back line.

The Seaside should have doubled their lead just before the break. Simon Francis crossed a brilliant free kick into the near post but Jean-Francois Christophe headed a good few yards over the bar from 4 yards out.

Just three minutes into the second half Tranmere Rovers pulled level. Gareth Edds flicked on a corner from the left and the ball evaded Francis and Baldwin and the unmarked Goodison prodded home past Steve Mildenhall at the far post.

The big Blues shot stopper had to be on top form to deny Rovers just minutes later. The 6 foot 5" keeper raced off his line to close down the angle to deny Ian Thomas-Moore's clever volley at the near post.

Jean-Francois Christophe then had two further chances to give Southend the lead. However, the direction on his headers, were yet again off target as frustration increased around Roots Hall.

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The game became really scrappy but Southend still looked the better side and created more chances to win the game but Christophe's 20-yard effort went well wide of the goal and Alan McCormack smashed a shot into the side netting.

Saturday 20th February 2010
MK Dons 3-1 Southend United

Blues XI: Steve Mildenhall, Simon Francis, Jean-Yves M'Voto, Pat Baldwin, Adam Barrett, Sanchez Watt, Alan McCormack, Jean-Francois Christophe, Damian Scannell, Francis Laurent and Scott Vernon.

Journey: **8 out of 10.** No traffic whatsoever and made good time getting there and arriving back in Essex.
Stadium: **8 out of 10.** A fantastic arena and will be superb when it is fully completed.
Food Quality/Service: **5 out of 10.** Decent service however £1.70 for Bovril was a tad over priced.
Programme: **7 out of 10.** A quality little magazine and definitely worth the £3 price.
Performance: **7 out of 10.** A decent first half performance but disappointed in the second as Blues heads dropped when the second goal went in.

Southend United's record against MK Dons got worse with a 3-1 defeat to the Dons at stadium:mk. The result flattered the hosts but the Blues wasted 4 or 5 decent chances to score and ultimately paid the price. Striker Matt Paterson continued from his decent reserve performance by pulling back a consolation goal for the Seasideers.

The MK Dons started off really brightly and pegged the Blues back into their own box for the opening 5 minutes and nearly took the lead when Dean Lewington headed straight at Mildenhall from Leven's cross. That proved the perfect tonic for the Blues as they came out and started to play their flowing football.

A great run from Damian Scannell, taking on Lewington, before cutting the ball back to the penalty spot where McCormack could not get on the end of it but Vernon did and nearly gave the Blues the lead but his shot was clawed away by Gueret.

It was the Colchester loanee that nearly scored again but Gueret smothered his tame effort on the goal line as the Blues continued to pressurize the Dons goal. Despite all the Blues pressure it was the Dons who took the lead against the run of play. Jermaine Easter held the ball up well before playing a ball across for Carrington who side-footed the ball powerfully past Mildenhall with a help of a slight deflection.

Southend did not give up and nearly got the equaliser they deserved when Simon Francis saw his curling free kick smash off the right hand post of Willy Gueret's goal. MK Dons slightly threatened the goal through Tunnicliffe but his effort went wide and down the other end Christophe somehow managed to completely miss a beautiful cross from Simon Francis.

Before half-time MK Dons nearly doubled their advantage but Luke Chadwick's effort was turned around the post by the out-stretched leg of Jean-Yves M'Voto. Scott Vernon was causing trouble yet again when he latched onto a Laurent through ball but he just could not beat Gueret. With all the chances created Southend really should have got on level terms at least but they just could not find the final touch to the decent move before hand.

With just 4 minutes of the second half gone MK Dons scored a carbon copy of their first goal. Mark Carrington latched onto another cut back to fire home past Steve Mildenhall.

Damian Scannell showed that Southend still carried a threat and went close after beating 3 players but did not show any composure in front of goal as his effort flew well over the bar. Southend still had to be aware though and Mildenhall did well to deny Tunnicliffe with just 15 minutes remaining.

A glorious chance fell to Scott Vernon to pull a goal back for the Blues but he totally miscued a shot from 4 yards out with only Gueret to beat after good work by Scannell. The miss proved costly because just 30 seconds later MK Dons got their 3rd goal of the afternoon. Easter latched onto a poor ball from Christophe and he drove at the Blues defence and unleashed a shot that was saved by Mildenhall but Townsend reacted quicker than the flat-footed Simon Francis.

Substitute Matt Paterson pulled a late consolation back from the Shrimpers but it was too little too late as Southend yet again look back on a game they dominated football-wise but just lack the cut of edge in the final 3rd.

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Tuesday 23rd February 2010
Norwich City 2-1 Southend United

Blues XI: Steve Mildenhall, Simon Francis, Jean-Yves M'Voto, Pat Baldwin, Adam Barrett, Scott Malone, Alan McCormack, Jean-Francois Christophe, Damian Scannell, Franck Moussa and Scott Vernon.

Journey: **7 out of 10.** A tiring journey home after sitting in traffic and giving the A12 problem the driver did very well.
Stadium: **9 out of 10.** A brilliant stadium and a great atmosphere.
Food Quality/Service: **N/A.**
Programme: **6 out of 10.** Not very impressed with the programme and considering some of the programmes that I have paid the same price for, this is well below par.
Performance: **8/9 out of 10.** A wholehearted performance and the players gave everything to see it cruelly snatched away from the Blues in the dying seconds.

Substitute Oli Johnson came off the bench and scored two goals in the final 15 minutes of the game to complete a dramatic turn around and inflict a painful defeat on Southend United. Scott Vernon had given the Blues a deserved half-time lead.

In a lively first half of the game it was Norwich who had the first chance. Left back Michael Rose, on loan from Stockport County, delivered a cross into the box and it was miss-hit from the defender but it nearly caught Mildenhall off guard but he still managed to tip it over the cross bar. Just seconds later Jean-Yves M'Voto blocked a shot from Anthony McNamee.

Southend were playing very well and had their first sight on goal when Scott Vernon lashed a half volley wide of the Norwich City goal. Despite Blues playing well, Norwich City still had the threat coming forward and a moment of brilliance from Martin nearly opened the scoring. The striker turned Adam Barrett with a fantastic turn before curling it narrowly past the far post.

Steve Mildenhall was called into action and he was on spectacular form to tip a powerful left-footed drive from Simon Lappin over the cross bar. Southend were playing great football and were making the home fans restless and their hard work was rewarded with a goal just on the stroke of half time.

Damian Scannell did well down the right and beat Rose by poking the ball past him before crossing in a great ball which fell nicely to Scott Vernon who turned and hit firmly past Forster and into the back of the net to send Southend into ecstasy.

Norwich must have been given a kick up the backside by Lambert and within just 10 minutes of the restart they had a great chance. McNamee played a ball to Grant Holt who cut inside before smashing a low shot off the right hand post and into touch.

Southend were still doing very well but it was Mildenhall that was called into action to block a Chris Martin shot before Norwich eventually got the leveler 13-minutes from time. Grant Holt saw his low drive saved well by Mildenhall but Oli Johnson raced onto the rebound to stroke home from 6 yards.

The Shrimpers were still pressing and had a sight on goal when Matt Paterson got on the end of a good move but his shot was low and had very little pace on it. However, Southend nearly won the game, when Simon Francis saw his beautifully struck free kick clawed away by Forster as it was heading towards the top corner.

But with 5 minutes of injury time awarded the inevitable happened as Norwich won the match and stole a point away from Southend. Oli Johnson was on hand to clip a header past Mildenhall at the near post and give City all three points.

Friday 26th February 2010
Southend United 1-2 Charlton Athletic

Blues XI: Steve Mildenhall, Simon Francis, Jean-Yves M'Voto Owono, Pat Baldwin, Adam Barrett, Sanchez Watt, Alan McCormack, Jean-Francois Christophe, Damian Scannell, Matt Paterson and Scott Vernon.

Southend United dragged even closer to slipping into the bottom four of League One after being beaten in injury time for the second time in as many games. Former Blues midfielder Nicky Bailey was greeted with a hostile reception at Roots Hall and he was behind the sending off of Jean-Francois Christophe early on in the match.

It was Bailey that had the first sight on goal in the match. He cut in from the left hand-side and lashed a 20-yard effort, which brought a good save from Steve Mildenhall in a lively opening to the game.

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The front pairing of Southend linked up well and it was Paterson who had the Blues' first attempt on goal but the former Scottish U19 international could only hit a shot wide of the target. The Blues continued to press and nearly took the lead through Arsenal loanee Sanchez Watt. The midfielder headed a Simon Francis cross goal bound but saw his effort tipped around the post by Elliot.

Then the night turned sour. In the 25th minute Blues were awarded a free-kick on the edge of the box and as Christophe went to pick the ball up Nicky Bailey pushed him full in the back and as Jean-Francois confronted him Bailey flew himself on the ground as if he had been shot when there was not any contact at all.

From that resulting free-kick Blues nearly scored as Francis saw his effort tipped around the post by Elliot. Blues did take the lead in the 31st minute in fortunate circumstances. Matt Paterson smashed a 30-yard free-kick straight at Elliot but the pace seemed to have deceived Robbie Elliot and it sneaked over the goal line to give the Blues the lead.

Steve Mildenhall had to be alert to save a low shot from Lloyd Sam and make sure that The Shrimpers were leading at the break.

After the break it was not a surprise to see Charlton dominate proceedings and Mildenhall was on good form to keep the score line in Southend's favour. Reading loanee David Mooney stung the hands of Mildenhall with a volley and the same player was denied by a wonderful goal line clearance from Simon Francis when only 3 yards out.

Charlton continued to come forward and Mildenhall did well to save a Reid effort before Adam Barrett did well to header off the line as the Addicks really put on the pressure.

The inevitable happened as Charlton did equalise. The impressive Kyel Reid put in a teasing cross and it found its way to the back stick and the unmarked Akpo Sodje volleyed home past Mildenhall.

Southend did still threaten and went agonizingly close to going back in front when Simon Francis hit another peach of a free-kick but it smashed off the under side of the cross bar and the rebound from Laurent seemed to get stuck in the midst of all the players on the goal-line.

Just moments later big Jean-Yves M'Voto should have done a lot better but his header from 8 yards out flew harmlessly over the bar as Southend looked to sneak a win.

With 6 minutes added on by the fourth official Charlton got the winner in that injury time. A long ball over the top was raced onto by Reid and Mildenhall and M'Voto were lost in communication and the Sheffield United loanee smashed a low drive into the far corner of the net to give Charlton all three points.

Saturday 6th March 2010

Hartlepool United 3-0 Southend United

Blues XI: Steve Mildenhall, Simon Francis, Jean-Yves M'Voto, Pat Baldwin, Adam Barrett, Franck Moussa, Alan McCormack, Damian Scannell, Franck Moussa, Matt Paterson and Scott Vernon.

Journey:	8 out of 10. A very long trip but we made great time getting to Hartlepool and back to Southend, including 2 half hour stops.
Stadium:	4 out of 10. An old ground with very little atmosphere and very poor attendance.
Food Quality/Service:	10/10. Was tempted to get the 'Hot Dog' but went for the chips and they did not disappoint, the highlight of the day.
Programme:	6 out of 10. Unusual these days for them to cost £2.50 but it covered what it needed to even though some of the pictures were pixelated.
Performance:	5 out of 10. After committed performances V Norwich and Charlton the Blues went back to their old ways struggling against the teams in and around them.

Southend United left Victoria Park without any points and being placed in the bottom 4 of League One. Former loanee Roy O'Donovan piled more trouble on his former club when he coolly netted a hat trick to move Hartlepool away from danger momentarily.

Right from the word go you could see O'Donovan was up for this and he won the Pools a free-kick on the edge of the box but Austin could only fire over the bar. Then as the home side gathered momentum former Orient forward Boyd, who scored a great effort at Roots Hall earlier this season, tried his luck from 25 yards but Mildenhall was equal to his fantastic dipping volley.

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The pressure soon resulted in the opening goal of the match and it was the tale of two Sunderland loanee's that was the moral of this story. O'Donovan got away from M'Voto before clipping the ball over Mildenhall and in off the underside of the crossbar to give Pools a deserved lead.

Southend had to get into the game and went close when Scott Vernon saw his shot go wide of the left post and Scott Flinders did ever so well to palm away a low, stinging effort from Simon Francis.

Despite Southend slowly getting into the game disaster struck in the 32nd minute of the game when O'Donovan scored his second. It was M'Voto, who again stood still thinking that Roy was offside, but the flag kept down and O'Donovan raced onto Boyd's through ball, and steadied himself before placing low past Mildenhall.

The second half had to get better and with defensive changes, Southend looked to get back into the game. However, it was Hartlepool who had the first chance, when Jones lashed a 15-yard shot wide of the goal post. Simon Francis delivered a superb ball into the box, which was begging to be finished, but Laurent could only header wide of the target from close range. Southend continued to come forward and went even closer from Franck Moussa.

The Belgian midfielder drilled a low shot that had Flinders beaten, but Sweeney got his head to it, and it deflected narrowly wide of the post. From that corner Scott Vernon headed well wide from a decent position.

McCormack then lunged in and got his marching orders for his second yellow of the game. As Southend game forward they did not really look dangerous, however, Francis struck the post with a powerful drive, but as we were coming forward they hit us on the counter attack and O'Donovan left his marker for dead before drilling a low shot past Mildenhall to end a terrible afternoon for Southend.

Saturday 13th March 2010

Southend United 0-0 Exeter City

Blues XI: Steve Mildenhall, Simon Francis, Pat Baldwin, Adam Barrett, Scott Malone, Damian Scannell, Anthony Grant, Franck Moussa, Francis Laurent, Matt Paterson and Scott Vernon.

Southend United and Exeter City played out a very stale and uneventful game in front of nearly 7,000 at Roots Hall in this relegation 6 pointer. Chances were very few and far between as both sides now stay in the bottom 4 and 4 points away from safety.

It was a very slow start to the match by both sides but it was the Blues that nearly opened the scoring. A ball over the top by Francis found striker Matt Paterson who in turn played the ball to Scott Vernon but the Colchester loanee could only shot tamely straight at Paul Jones.

That chance did not seem to spark the game up at all as it continued to be a dire affair. Exeter had a long range shot on goal that went straight into the path of Steve Mildenhall but nothing major that would worry a keeper of that standing. That was to be the last real chance on goal in the first half in what was a very dismal game.

Within 10 minutes of the second half, we had seen more action, than we did in the whole of the first half. Francis Laurent picked the ball up on the right and drifted inside the park to play a one-two with Paterson and when he received the ball back he brought a fantastic save from Jones to tip over the crossbar.

It was Southend who were attacking again and Vernon held off the challenge from the defender before seeing his low drive saved at the near post and the rebound was blazed over the bar by Laurent.

Exeter had been on the back foot but Mildenhall had to be alert to make a world-class save. Dunne smashed a 20-yard pile-driver which Mildenhall tipped onto the crossbar and it was followed up by Stansfield who passed home into an empty net, but the linesman's flag was raised for off-side.

After the up-tempo start to the second half, the game went dead. A deflected effort from Stansfield that just went wide of the goal and a bad touch from Fleetwood cancelled out any chance on goal there.

As the clock was ticking down the final chance fell to Scannell. Jones blocked his shot and Blues must now turn their attentions to getting maximum points from the next two home matches.

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Saturday 20th March 2010

Southend United 2-2 Carlisle United

Blues XI: Steve Mildenhall, Simon Francis, Pat Baldwin, Adam Barrett, Johnny Herd, Damian Scannell, Anthony Grant, Alan McCormack, Franck Moussa Matt Paterson and Scott Vernon.

Southend United battled back from 2 goals down to salvage a 2-2 draw at a wet Roots Hall. Goals from Franck Moussa and Adam Barrett got the Blues on level terms but the latter was on the receiving end of a controversial refereeing decision and was sent off.

The opening minutes were a nightmare for Southend and they went behind in just 6 minutes. Horwood crossed the ball in and Scott Dobie got enough contact on the ball to guide a header past Steve Mildenhall to shock a raucous Roots Hall.

Damian Scannell nearly forced an early equaliser for Southend but his low shot was saved well by Collin but disaster struck in the 13th minute as Carlisle doubled their lead.

It was Horwood again with the cross and Jason Price left it, the ball evaded Johnny Herd, and was poked home from close range by Ben Marshall. Steve Mildenhall was on good form to block a Marshall effort a few minutes later and got up quickly to respond to a header from Price.

The best move of the first half was between Francis and Scannell and the later squared the ball across to Franck Moussa who beat two players before firing a low left footed effort past the goalkeeper to give Blues something to cheer about.

The goal seemed to lift Southend and a few moments later Franck Moussa struck the post and from the resulting corner Blues were level. Adam Barrett met a great delivery from Simon Francis to power home from close range.

The Shrimpers continued to dominate and that carried on into the second half as Matt Paterson and Alan McCormack combined and it was Paterson who went mighty close as his shot went just over the bar.

Mildenhall had to be alert and he was on fine form to deny Peter Murphy as Carlisle tried to burst Southend's bubble. But the bubble did burst 25 minutes from time when the appalling referee gave Barrett his marching orders for a second yellow card after he was adjudged to have kicked a Carlisle player but it was clear that Barrett went to strike the ball.

Blues did well to hang on to a point and nearly took the lead when Damian Scannell saw his 20-yard shot saved brilliantly by Collin.

With seconds left on the clock Southend nearly won the game when Simon Francis' free kick just went wide of the post.

22nd March 2010