

## NEWSLETTER – Vol. 5 Iss. 05. – May 2010

### THE INTRODUCTION – Paul FitzGerald

#### Back to square one?

**According to Ron, we are far better placed than at any time in the preceding years.....well, it doesn't seem like it and the recent blogs seem to rewrite a few details that I remember very differently!**

Ron can't believe we've been relegated and despite a nod that not paying the players, suppliers and staff might have had some impact, refuses to accept that it is in fact the major reason.

Of course the money was always coming – Ron promised it - so why would anyone not believe him. I wonder how many Captains have told a similar story before to the crew of a sinking ship.

And recently, in the Echo now the Chairman and the Echo have kissed and made up (thank goodness), he suggests that the players will react differently when they see the new stadium being built.

Wake up time Mr Martin! Most of the players couldn't give a monkeys about the new stadium and to be frank, the fans are getting fed up with it too. You will own the new stadium and all associated revenue earners. The club will own nothing except debt.

Of course that is not to say we don't want a new stadium and I'm sure it will be good for the club, town, Mr Ron Martin - given the yet to be viewed but stated "business plan".



The good news, is that Ron agreed to put in writing, a cap on the rent that the club will pay to Ron Martin Stadium operating company – and we look forward to seeing that as soon as possible

Some more very good news of course, was that Her Majesty has now not only been paid in full but also (marginally) in advance, because of the "habitual" nature of the clubs defaulting on payments.

As we enter the close season, one wonders what incentive the powers that be have to pay anyone – and I foresee much turmoil around the Players pay, contracts, suppliers invoices, the PFA and of course the Trust.

And on that point, the Club not surprisingly, have exercised their right to extend the Loan from the Trust one further time to the final date of 30<sup>th</sup> June 2010. This time they did have the courtesy to tell us before defaulting and we are expecting clarity on when and how the funds will be paid in the next few days.

The Trust held its first members open meeting on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> April in the Shrimpers immediately following a shortened committee meeting. The numbers attending were not exactly in the hundreds but it was a good and lively turn out and an opportunity for the members to have a collective vocal say outside of the AGM. As a committee we felt it was a good evening and plan to do it again on a regular basis, either as circumstances demand or at the very least 6 months after the AGM

Of course we want feedback at all times so please feel free to contact any of us – Specifically, if any member wants to talk to me about any aspect of Trust business - I am available match days in the Shrimpers Bar, can be contacted via the Trust Website or via [pfitz666@aol.com](mailto:pfitz666@aol.com).

## SHRIMPERS TRUST PLAYER OF THE YEAR AWARDS 2009/10

**Simon Francis completed a clean sweep of Player of the Year awards as he claimed both the Shrimpers Trust Player of the Year and Southend Junior Shrimper Player of the Year accolades.**

Having already won the main club award, the full-back was further feted in front of a committed and enthusiastic group of supporters on Thursday night. Francis thanked supporters after fending off competition from midfielder Anthony Grant (second) and goalkeeper Steve Mildenhall (third) to collect the main award, voted for by Shrimpers Trust members, from Steve Tilson. SJS competition winner Dan McDuff had earlier handed the former Sheffield United youngster his award from the Trust's Under-16 group.

In the Goal of the Season category, Belgian midfielder Franck Moussa emerged as a clear winner for his stunning volley in the home match against Walsall during March. His excellent technique helped him to beat Lee Barnard (against Bristol Rovers at home in October) and Francis Laurent (the injury-time winner at Brighton & Hove Albion in September).



At the end of the night, Blues boss Tilson moved to thank supporters for sticking by the team in adversity: *"I would like to thank the fans; the support at home and away has been fantastic. We got 7,000 for the last home game against Stockport, who were bottom, and we appreciate that. I get a bit of grief, but I expect that and on the whole the support has been superb. From the bottom of my heart, I appreciate it,"* he said.

Tilson was also cheered to the rafters after acknowledging the contribution of his former assistant: *"I'd like to say thank-you to Paul Brush - who isn't here tonight - he was a fantastic servant for six years alongside me. It has been a tough season, but I'd like to thank all the staff: Lawrence Bloom and Lee Turner, who work tirelessly, John Stannard, our physio; I know it has been a tough season for you to watch us get relegated."*

*"Ricky Duncan and your youth team, you also work tirelessly. We weren't quite good enough, but I'd like to thank the players who have worked as hard as they can. The table doesn't lie,"* the 43-year-old added.



Duncan was on hand to give out commemorative photographs to the monthly Shrimpers Trust SUFC Youth Team Player of the Month winners, who were Harry Crawford, Julian Okai, Jamie Dennis, Adetayo Osifuwa, Merrick James-Lewis, Anthony Furlonge and Marcus Milner.

That led to the 3-2-1 for the Tom Grace Memorial Shield, awarded to the 2009/10 Youth Team Player of the Year. The award is named in the memory of a former Shrimpers supporter who sadly passed away at the age of 15 in July 2007, and Tom's brother Nick gave out the prizes. In third was Marcus Milner, second was Kyle Asante whilst the winner was Harry Crawford, who recently scored on his full debut for the senior side against Stockport.

Duncan paid tribute to the Trust and the club's fans in general for their contribution to the club's youth department: *"The money that the Shrimpers Trust have given us makes a massive difference because it is supporters putting the money in. The youth department is about you; you will always support the club, the players and staff may go. You have supplied so much, and we have seen the benefit with players coming through into the first team,"* he revealed.

Finally, the evening saw the Trust's top coach travellers handed commemorative awards having completed 7,948 miles watching the Shrimpers. Scott Barber, Alan Gifford, Lesley Hicks, Dean Overall, Gaye Overall, Keith Overall, Warren Sadler and Terry Slater were those to have travelled the entire distance, whilst Nathan Jowett, who clocked up 5,114, was the top junior traveller.



## PAUL AND ROB'S HIGH COURT BLOG

With Ron Martin revealing to the media that the outstanding tax debt of £378,000 has been transferred to HMRC, now seems the perfect time to reflect on last week's events in the Royal Courts of Justice on The Strand in London, proceedings witnessed by the Shrimpers Trust's *Paul Yeomanson* and **Robert Craven**, who take up the story below.



*Rob and I arrived at Court in good time after walking through the maze which is the Royal Courts of Justice. The Royal Courts of Justice really are a daunting place; I'd hate to personally be up in one of those courtrooms, although the Thomas More Building, where SUFC's case was situated, it much like Southend Civic Centre on a taller scale, rather than the original grand buildings that you see on the news.*

*There were quite a few people waiting outside including barristers, solicitors and defendants for the seemingly endless list of cases to be heard. Among them were also reporters from SKY, BBC Look East & BBC Essex Radio. No sign, as yet, of Ron.*

*Just before 10.30am, we made our way to the gallery in the courtroom and settled down for the morning's 'entertainment'. It was at this point that Ron came into the court, took one look round and walked out. Perhaps he had spotted us!*

*We sat through around 20 or so cases of which some were dismissed, some adjourned and quite a few were wound up (the good news was that Codemasters and The Gourmet Mushroom Company live to fight another day). I was at this time getting a little concerned at the ruthless streak both the HMRC Barrister and the Registrar had; things did not look good as they were not giving much leeway on some cases.*

*And then it was us, a little before 11.00am. Ron had returned to the courtroom in good time with his Solicitor. As in previous cases, the Clerk of the Court read out the case number, but before the HMRC's Barrister could even present his case, the presiding registrar said that he was adjourning the case until 2.00pm. This appeared to take both sides by surprise and the Barrister for the Defence tried to inform the Court that the money had been lodged in the account of a major retailer, but the Registrar simply wasn't interested.*

**The Club's Barrister and the HMRC's representative had been deep in conversation filing into the courtroom for the morning session, but they weren't given any opportunity to present their cases and it was instead to be put in front of Registrar Barber in the afternoon.**

*So that was it, and with both Rob & I frantically wearing out the keypads on our mobile phones we filed out of the court room. We had a chat with the press people and another SUFC supporter who had travelled up just for the Hearing. We all then left the court buildings, and in my case made several phone calls explaining why I would not be appearing at the Office that afternoon.*

*After a lunch and then a drink in a quaint little pub opposite, Rob & I returned to Court 55 at around 1.30pm. Whilst sat outside waiting for the proceedings to begin we were eavesdropping on a conversation between the HMRC Barrister and the HMRC Case Officer, the majority of the conversation centring around SUFC's case and a 'missing' email that the Case Officer had sent a runner back to their offices to track down. What could this mean? Only time would tell, and just before 2.00pm we retook our seats in the gallery.*

**I think the most nervous period was seeing the two Barristers talking over the case before the 2.00pm Hearing, with Ron and his Solicitor getting involved and then him walking out clutching his mobile phone. For a minute, I didn't think he was going to be back in the room when the Registrar was called.**

*Whilst waiting for the Registrar, Rob & I noticed that both the HMRC's and the Club's Barristers were deep in conversation, discussing it seems the validity of the Club's case for a seven-day adjournment and we were hearing snippets about money being lodged at the solicitors. Anyway it was at this point that Ron and the Solicitor returned to the courtroom and had a quick discussion with their Barrister, which resulted in them asking for a further delay to confirm some information. The Clerk of the Court advised that the Registrar would not hear the case until 2.10pm. With that, Ron scurried out of the courtroom desperately trying to find a number in his phone closely followed by his Barrister & Solicitor.*

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*Anyway, just after 2.10pm, Ron and his entourage returned just as the Registrar took her seat, beginning probably the most nervous ten minutes of my Southend United-supporting life. The HMRC Barrister laid out his case and at the end advised that he was not instructed to agree to a seven-day extension.*

**The HMRC Barrister explained the finer details of the debt, breaking it up into the amount paid (£60,000), the amount initially petitioned for (£162,000) and the further amount that they were seeking (c.£200,000, including an advanced payment for April), totalling £378,000. He repeated that he had not been instructed to seek an adjournment for any period of time, but he said that, if the Registrar was minded and the Club's Barrister put up a good enough argument, then he may be persuaded to consent to a seven-day adjournment, or a shorter period.**

**The Registrar asked him why the case had been marked 'Final' on the last occasion when there was an amendment for April's amount to be included, but he said that he was new to the case and had not been in Court 35 days ago, so could not answer.**

*After clarifying a couple of points the Registrar then asked SUFC's Barrister to state the Club's case. The case was based on the fact that a major retailer had lodged with its solicitor the sum of £400,000 and gave a breakdown of how that figure was reached, and why it had only been lodged today. Strangely, she mentioned the fact that Sainsbury's had offered to pay the £400,000 straight into the HMRC Solicitors' account, therefore avoiding any delay. Common sense should have prevailed, but alas no, the HMRC turned this offer down. One can only guess why, but I feel that they thought in doing so they could get the Club wound up.*

**The Club's Barrister then presented her case, and said that, since the money had been lodged in Cameron McKenna's account by the major retailer, that it would be "absurd" for HMRC to seek to wind the club up. The Registrar asked who Cameron McKenna was, which is when the Club's Barrister slipped up and said "Sainsbury's...sorry, the major retailer's solicitor"; you could almost sense the release from the Press corps situated in front of us.**

**The Club's Barrister was asked why the money had not been paid to HMRC - she said that the Club had offered to transfer the money into HMRC's Solicitors' account, but this request had been refused. The reason that the money had to be with a Solicitor, she argued, was because of the complexity of the payment and that Sainsbury's (sorry, the major retailer!) wanted to double-check the details before signing it off, which she anticipated they would do either later that working day or Thursday.**

*The Registrar also questioned why the adjournment issued 35 days ago had originally been marked as 'Final' when by their own admittance the HMRC had changed the original order. I think that this in itself helped with the favourable decision made by the Registrar.*

*After summing up the Registrar granted a further seven-day adjournment, with the HMRC again requesting this was marked as 'Final', to which she agreed, with the SUFC Barrister advising that the money would be paid to the HMRC by Thursday at the latest.*

**The Registrar then said that there should be a seven-day adjournment until Wednesday 21st April 2010 and that the case should be marked 'Final', declaring ominously, "And this time 'Fina' means ;'Final'". So off we went.**

*And that was that, we all filed out of Court again hoping that our mobile phone batteries would withstand the abuse about to be handed out to them!!! Ron did acknowledge us as we left but then started a Royal Courts of Justice game of hide & seek. The Sky reporter asked if Ron would give an interview to which he agreed, adding that he would meet him at the front of the building. But Ron caught them napping and tried to slip out the back way, although he couldn't outwit the guile of the BBC who caught him sneaking out, and word soon spread to the front of the buildings that Ron had been located.*

*Knowing that both the BBC & SKY wanted to do a piece with Rob we also scurried off to the rear of the buildings but to no avail, not a camera or Ron in sight. So we walked back round to the front, and just as we were going to leave Rob got a phone call from the BBC reporter, and we all met up again, and Rob was then interviewed by BBC Look East. And that was it, or so I thought as a microphone & camera were shoved in my face. Oh damn, I thought, I don't do interviews, but I had no choice, and to make things worse after SKY had finished with Rob they also collared me.*

**My impression was that the HMRC Barrister was pretty lenient with us and that he didn't go for the kill. Of course, ostensibly it was in HMRC's interest for us to pay as they then received their money, and this may have played a part. Although he reiterated that he had not been instructed to seek an adjournment, he certainly gave the impression that he was not unhappy that it was granted, so SUFC were consequently granted a stay of execution.**

## EXPOSING CHELSEA'S DEFENCE

### Blackpool, October 1931

Footballers are soft these days, old timers are fond of telling us. They play in 'carpet slippers', use balloons as footballs and have games postponed if there is a spot of rain on the pitch, An exaggeration, perhaps, but the old timers could point to plenty of evidence when Chelsea took a fateful trip to the seaside in October, 1931. The game at Blackpool was more a question of how many players would collapse with hypothermia and exposure. At full time Chelsea were left with six men.

It was a cold, miserable, windy day with ferocious driving rain. Fifteen minutes before kick-off the Bloomfield Road stadium was comparatively deserted. The eventual gathering of 6000 spectators was about half the usual size. It was a wonder the game started, and Chelsea later complained that the pitch was unfit. Ground staff worked with pitchforks in a futile attempt to clear the water.

Chelsea, missing their famous Scottish International Hughie Gallacher (how glad he must have been), won the toss and sensibly opted to kick off with the wind behind them. But conditions soon proved almost impossible. The ball either plopped in mud or squirted over grease. The first chance fell to Jimmy Hampson of Blackpool but he lost the ball in one of the more shallow lakes.

Chelsea found it hopeless to pursue their normal short passing game and soon trailed to Wilkinson's 12<sup>th</sup> minute goal. Even the referee had difficulty. Mr Jones of Nottingham lost his balance and tumbled to his knees, much to the amusement of the spectators.

In the 31<sup>st</sup> and 34<sup>th</sup> minutes Jimmy Hampson scored two freak goals to give Blackpool a 3-0 half time lead. First the England international centre forward dribbled round Vic Woodly as the Chelsea goalkeeper lost his footing in the mud. Then Woodley stooped to intercept a cross, fell on both knees, and gasped in amazement as the ball stopped dead in the mud a yard from him. Hampson stepped in, used his foot as a spade and thanked the weather for his second goal.

At half time the first sensation. Peter O'Dowd, soon to become England's centre-half, slumped unconscious in the dressing room. His body temperature had dropped dangerously low. Two other Chelsea players were overcome by the cold. The second half started with only eight in the Chelsea team. Although they were soon restored to ten men, nobody relished the water polo activities in the Chelsea penalty area. Blackpool's long ball game was well suited to the conditions and Hampson completed his hat trick in the 75<sup>th</sup> minute.

Immediately after Blackpool's fourth goal, two Chelsea players left the field. The crowd booed and jeered, but it didn't stop another Chelsea player limping off. Soon there were only six left. And, on the same day (October 31<sup>st</sup>), at nearby Blackburn, two of the home side and three Sheffield United players were treated for exposure, while the referee collapsed from the cold. After a 20 minute delay, a linesman completed the game.

At the end of that season (1931-2), Blackpool escaped relegation from the First Division by one point. They were grateful to the day at Bloomfield Road when Chelsea's defence was exposed to the cold.

But even in the 1930's some old timers were doubtless arguing that it was tougher in their day. There was a famous occasion at Grimsby (1912) when six Leicester Fosse players walked off the pitch ten minutes from the end of their 4-0 defeat, and Leicester trainer Harley Thompson was later suspended for enticing them off. And Earnest Nedham, Sheffield United's famous international at the turn of the century, recalled a numbing experience at Aston Villa. Writing in his book *Association Football*, he described it like this: '*The bitterly cold wind and sleet pierced one, numbing muscle and brain. Men on both sides succumbed and were carried away to hot baths and stimulants. I left the field half an hour before the finish of time, and by doing so probably saved my life.*' Even Faulke was carried in completely exhausted. Several of the Villans did what playing they could in great-coats and one used an umbrella.'

## FUNDRAISING

### 100 Club

**The latest winners in the scheme, pulled out of the hat during weekly draws since the last newsletter were Graham Trueman, Steve Stone, Valerie Fane, Dave Barlow, Wally Despy, Jimmy Hummerston, Gordon Harvey, Peter Brock, Jimmy Hummerston (*again!!*) and Trevor Bashford.**

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](mailto: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 finished for the season and we raised a total of **£1525.35**

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.

Details regarding next Season's Quid a Goal Scheme will be published in our next Newsletter and on the Trust Website [www.shrimperstrust.co.uk](http://www.shrimperstrust.co.uk)

## MEMBERSHIP

### Welcome to New Life Members (Total 188)

#### Martin & Zoe Cranmer

If you are interested in joining this group please contact our Membership Secretary, Paul Yeomanson via email at [membership@shrimperstrust.co.uk](mailto: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](http://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

**Dave Burgess, Connor Cunningham, Reece Dawson, Tom Finch, Kevin Fogg, Robert McMullan, Lara McSweeney, Neil Oakley, Patrick O'Connor, Tony Riley, Gareth Savory, Tony Sills, Penny Smith, Sam Smith, Glenn Taylor, Antony Thorpe and Michael Thorpe.**

\*\*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](http://www.shrimperstrust.co.uk) \*\*

## FORTHCOMING TRUST EVENTS

Monday 26<sup>th</sup> July 2010

### CHINESE NIGHT

East, 33 Alexander Street, Southend on Sea – 7.30pm for an 8.00pm prompt start

For further details contact Alan Perry

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



## WORLD CUP PREDICTION COMPETITION

The Shrimpers Trust are once again running a World Cup Prediction competition and by now you should have all received details of the competition along with an Entry Form.

The format will be the same as in previous years with score predictions required for each of the group matches and then predicting the teams to reach each of the following rounds.

The competition is open to **everyone** and not restricted to trust members (*or one entry per person*) so feel free to pass this on to work colleagues, friends, family, whoever.....the more the merrier!

The entry fee is **£5** per entry with half going towards the prize pool and the other half to trust funds. The prize pool is then split with **60%** going to the winner, **30%** to the runner up and the remaining **10%** to third place. Obviously the more entries we get, the bigger the prize pool gets!



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If you require further Entry Forms they can be downloaded from the Trust Website at [http://www.shrimperstrust.co.uk/home.asp?page\\_id=169](http://www.shrimperstrust.co.uk/home.asp?page_id=169) or alternatively they are available by contacting Paul Yeomanson by email at [info@shrimperstrust.co.uk](mailto:info@shrimperstrust.co.uk) or by phone on 01702 302373.

Regular updates will be posted on the Trust Website including the Total Prize Fund once the World Cup gets under way.

**So get your entries in now, the closing date is June 9<sup>th</sup> !!!!**

## BARBER'S BLURB – TERRACE TALK MATCH REPORTS

**Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2010**  
**Southend United 3-0 Walsall**

Blues XI: **Steve Mildenhall, Simon Francis, Pat Baldwin, Osei Sankofa, Johnny Herd, Damian Scannell, Anthony Grant, Alan McCormack, Franck Moussa, Scott Spencer and Scott Vernon.**

Southend United moved to within a point of safety after easily dispatching Walsall at Roots Hall on Tuesday night. A brace from Franck Moussa and a fine header from Scott Spencer sealed all three points for The Blues ahead of Saturday's trip to Bristol Rovers.

The opening of the game was fairly slow with Steve Jones having the only real attempt on goal in the first 15 minutes for the visitors. However Blues soon took the lead in fantastic fashion through Belgian midfielder Franck Moussa.

The winger smashed home a thunderous volley on the edge of the box after Johnny Herd's long throw got cleared out to the midfielder. Roots Hall erupted as they sensed this was a wonderful chance to close in on moving out of the bottom four.

It was Moussa that went close again for the Shrimpers. He picked the ball up on the halfway line before running at the Walsall defence and he then unleashed a 30-yard drive that just drifted over the bar as Southend were starting to dominate.

Southend's chancing of winning their first game of 2010 was helped when Clayton McDonald got sent off with a straight red card for a 2-footed lunge on Blues midfielder Anthony Grant.

The visitors did not roll over and die as they looked to get back into the game and Southend had Pat Baldwin to thank for blocking Deeney's effort. They nearly got a shock equaliser just before the break though when Matt Richard's saw his free-kick smash off the underside of the crossbar and former Premier League star Julian Gray headed well over the bar from the rebound.

Just 6 minutes into the second half Blues all-but sealed the win when Scott Spencer nodded home from 8 yards out. The former £500,000 man glanced a header past Gilmartin in the goal after a wonderful ball from man of the match Franck Moussa.

Blues piled on more pressure and should have scored through Scott Vernon, Osei Sankofa and the impressive Moussa saw his low drive saved by Gilmartin.

Harry Crawford came on for his debut and would have had a perfect sight on goal if his first touch was not too heavy.

Full-back Simon Francis curled a wonderful cross into the box, after fantastic build-up play from Southend, and the best player on the field Moussa was there to nod home from a tight angle to settle the game for Blues and move them to 1 point of safety as they head to Bristol Rovers on Saturday.

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**Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2010**  
**Bristol Rovers 4-3 Southend United**

Blues XI: **Steve Mildenhall, Simon Francis, Adam Barrett, Pat Baldwin, Johnny Herd, Franck Moussa, Alan McCormack, Jean-Francois Christophe, Anthony Grant, Scott Spencer and Scott Vernon.**

**Journey:** 8 out of 10. A fantastic journey there and back without any problems.  
**Stadium:** 6 out of 10. Not the greatest and it was hard for away fans to conjure up any atmosphere without a roof.

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**Food Quality/Service:** 5/10. Thank God I got there when it was not very busy, two dopey people behind the counter, who kept forgetting what customers ordered!

**Programme:** 6 out of 10. Not very good quality paper but the information was worth a read.

**Performance:** 8 out of 10. To outplay a team at home for so long and to get undone by an own goal in the 94<sup>th</sup> minute was heart breaking. However, the players played with 100% commitment to the cause.

**Anthony Grant scored a heart-breaking own goal in the 4<sup>th</sup> minute of injury time to condone Southend United to a 4-3 defeat at the Memorial Stadium. Blues had take a 2 goal lead through Vernon and Spencer, however, Rovers fought back to take a 3-2 lead before Vernon equalised for the Blues, before Grant put through his own net.**

Southend got out of the traps early on in lightning speed and got the chance to take the lead in the 5<sup>th</sup> minute when striker Scott Vernon was brought down by former Blues trialist Mikkel Andersen when clear through on goal. The Reading loanee appeared to be time wasting by feigning injury to avoid a card, which he successfully achieved.

Vernon stepped up and kept his cool to place the ball the wrong side of Andersen and to give the Blues a 1-0 lead. This soon doubled when former Everton striker Scott Spencer lashed home a volley past Andersen.

Southend United were in firm control and did not look like conceding until the 35<sup>th</sup> minute when Pat Baldwin was caught in two minds whether to clear the ball or head it back to Mildenhall. Jo Kuffour did not hesitate and coolly lobbed the ball over the stranded Steve Mildenhall.

Just 3 minutes later The Gas were back on level terms when Simon Francis was harshly judged to have fouled Chris Lines and Jeff Hughes stepped up to take the resulting penalty kick which he converted past Mildenhall.

Inside just 7 minutes of the re-start Rovers were celebrating taking the lead for the first time in the fixture. Jeff Hughes got on the wrong side of Simon Francis and he converted Kuffour's pass to place a low shot past Steve Mildenhall.

The driving force, Alan McCormack, latched onto a through ball from Spencer before rounding the goalkeeper only to see his shot rebound off the far post. The ball rebounded to Moussa, but his powerful shot was cleared off the line, as Blues continued to dominate.

Vernon saw his close range header saved by Andersen and from the corner it was the Colchester loanee's 2<sup>nd</sup> goal of the game as his diving header squirmed into the near post.

With Blues in the ascendancy, their chances of going on to win the match were dashed when Franck Moussa was adjudged to have kicked out on Byron Anthony; replays showed that there was little contact.

Spencer went close to scoring his second but Andersen made another fine save and the Blues were dominating still with 10 men, they went mightily close, when Christophe fired a shot over the bar after a great run.

But in the 4<sup>th</sup> minute of injury time Blues hearts were broken as Anthony Grant turned the ball into his own net after a cross came into a crowded area. This result leaves the Blues 2 points off safety going into the Easter weekend fixtures.

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## Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2010 Southend United 0-0 Yeovil Town

Blues XI: **Steve Mildenhall, Simon Francis, Pat Baldwin, Adam Barrett, Johnny Herd, Jean-Francois Christophe, Anthony Grant, Alan McCormack, Scott Malone, Scott Spencer and Scott Vernon.**

**Southend United and Yeovil Town played out a dull and drab 0-0 draw at Roots Hall as either side failed to really have any attempts on goal. This draw leaves Blues 3 points off safety ahead of a crucial match against Gillingham on Easter Monday.**

Southend looked slow and gave The Glovers a sight on goal inside 30 seconds but the shot flew well over the bar. Former Ipswich striker Dean Bowditch then had a chance but his header went harmlessly over the bar from a free kick.

The game was played at a slow pace and neither side really looked like they wanted to be there but Blues nearly took the lead through a combination of Baldwin and Vernon. Johnny Herd launched a long through into



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the box which was helped on by Pat Baldwin but his former Col U teammate Vernon could only prod it wide as he stretched to make the ball.

You would have thought Southend would have come out all guns blazing, but it was the complete opposite, as Yeovil looked the more likely side to open the scoring and that nearly happened when Tomlin was given a chance to score but he lashed an effort well over the bar.

Southend looked bereft of any ideas and their only chance fell to Pat Baldwin again but he could only guide his effort past the post. As the game was coming to its close Yeovil nearly won the match through Andy Welsh and Tomlin but Steve Mildenhall was on hand to deny both of their efforts with good goalkeeping.

The referee brought the dire game to a close which leaves the Blues 3 points off safety going into a massive game against Gillingham on Easter Monday.

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## Monday 5<sup>th</sup> April 2010 Gillingham 3-0 Southend United

Blues XI: **Steve Mildenhall, Simon Francis, Adam Barrett, Pat Baldwin, Johnny Herd, Francis Laurent, Osei Sankofa, Jean-Francois Christophe, Anthony Grant, Scott Spencer and Scott Vernon.**

**Journey:** **8 out of 10.** Great journey there and back, only a few hold ups at the tunnel.  
**Stadium:** **5 out of 10.** The away end never really fills me with that much confidence but other than that it is not a bad little ground.  
**Food Quality/Service:** **4/10.** Only a small hut, long queues, over the top priced beer.  
**Programme:** **6 out of 10.** Did not really get chance to read it at the ground.  
**Performance:** **4 out of 10.** Really disappointing after recent performances as we yet again fail to beat the teams in and around us. Thank God, other teams around us dropped points; we are still in with a chance.

**Southend's chances of staying in League One were dealt a massive blow as they conceded three second half goals to relegation rivals Gillingham at The Priestfield. The Blues must now try and pick themselves up at Elland Road this weekend.**

Southend started really slowly and nearly fell behind inside just 3 minutes. Pat Baldwin was judged to have fouled his man and Danny Jackman curled a free kick that just went wide of Steve Mildenhall's goal.

The Shrimpers were very slow in possession but went mighty close to going ahead through Simon Francis, who was playing on the right wing, as Sankofa replaced him in defence.

Johnny Herd launched a ball into the box and it found its way to Simon at the far post but his curling left footed effort was clawed away by former Stevenage goalkeeper Alan Julian.

The game was still very dire, with the wind not helping matters, but the hosts were keeping the ball on the ground and opened up the Blues defence again but Howe could only curl his effort wide of the goal. It was Howe again that went close to opening the scoring but Mildenhall was on hand to save brilliantly from point blank range, as the Gills upped the tempo.

The 5-minute spell after half time happened again for Southend as the hosts took the lead. Christophe lost his man before Mildenhall made a good save from close range but former Grays man Dennis Oli tapped home, as he just beat Sankofa to the ball.

The goal seemed to lift the home side and just a few minutes later only a deflection from Adam Barrett denied Oli as his shot flew onto the crossbar. The pressure was all on Southend and Adam Miller let them off as his side-footed wide from 5 yards out, when the whole ground, thought it was in.

Southend were chasing the game and Laurent saw his tame shot blocked and straight from that mistake Gillingham scored their second. Jackson beat Grant for pace before playing the ball across to Rene Howe, who drilled it past Mildenhall, to secure the game.

Another Blues attack was left with them conceding another goal and this time former Orient player Barcham placed the ball into the top corner after good play by Curtis Weston.

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**Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> April 2010**

**Leeds United 2-0 Southend United**

Blues XI: **Steve Mildenhall, Simon Francis, Adam Barrett, Pat Baldwin, Johnny Herd, Stuart O’Keefe, Osei Sankofa, Jean-Francois Christophe, Anthony Grant, Matt Paterson and Scott Vernon.**

**Journey:** **8 out of 10.** No hassle whatsoever and easily got out of Elland Road.  
**Stadium:** **9 out of 10.** If the opposite stand to where we sat was bigger, this would get a 10 out of 10.  
**Food Quality/Service:** **7/10.** Decent service at the ground.  
**Programme:** **7 out of 10.** Lots of information, disappointed with the paper quality.  
**Performance:** **7 out of 10.** A great first half performance from the lads who gave 100% effort just undone by one substitution.

**Southend United left Elland Road empty handed yet again after a Simon Grayson inspired Leeds United scored 2 goals in the second half to condemn Blues to defeat. He replaced the ‘disliked’ Beckford and replaced him with Becchio and the Argentine made all the difference as he set up one and scored one to leave Southend 4 points off safety.**

After the performance at Gillingham on Monday Southend knew that they had to do much better to get anything from Elland Road. They started well and forced a corner inside 2 minutes that came to nothing.

Elland Road started to roar and they soon had their first sight of goal through Robert Snodgrass. The former Livingston man delivered a low cross that Mildenhall came out well to palm away.

It was Snodgrass again involved as he produced a fine save from Mildenhall after a great ball in by Gradel. Southend did not panic even though Leeds had a lot of the ball but all Blues hearts were in their mouths when Beckford got free at the far post but headed well wide.

Southend counter attacked well when Stuart O’Keefe played in Paterson who turned well on the edge of the box before trying an audacious lob from 25 yards that nearly came off.

Then Scott Vernon was put through on goal but he could only shoot straight at Shane Higgs.

The second half started on the same manner but Simon Grayson took off Beckford to ironic cheers around Elland Road and within 5 minutes of coming on Luciano Becchio helped create the first goal.

The Argentine nodded a goal-kick into the path of Snodgrass who then played it to Gradel who took on Johnny Herd before firing a low shot which deflected off Baldwin and into the back of the net.

Southend kept huffing and puffing but it was Leeds that killed it as a fixture in the 82<sup>nd</sup> minute when Becchio headed in Gradel’s cross to complete the win.

Blues kept pushing and went close through Jean-Yves M’Voto in the dying moments.

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**Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2010**

**Southend United 2-2 Brentford**

Blues XI: **Steve Mildenhall, Simon Francis, Pat Baldwin, Jean-Yves M’Voto, Johnny Herd, Jean-Francois Christophe, Anthony Grant, Alan McCormack, Franck Moussa, Francis Laurent and Scott Vernon.**

**Francis Laurent netted both goals as a superb second half showing from Southend United earned them a draw against a strong Brentford team. Former Blues striker Charlie MacDonald put the Bee’s ahead and Carl Cort put them 2-1 up, but Shrimpers bounced back both times through Laurent.**

Brentford started the brighter of the two sides and they dominated the opening 25 minutes of the game as Southend looked tired and not interested. On-loan Millwall forward Lewis Grabban went close early on before Brentford did take the lead.

After a similar mistake early on, Brentford cashed in on the defence mistake, and went ahead through Charlie MacDonald who once scoring muted his celebrations. Former £7m man Carl Cort played in MacDonald, who looked yards offside, who then placed a low shot underneath Steve Mildenhall.

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Southend hardly threatened but went close through Simon Francis after he shot over from the edge of the box. Southend added more pressure but Brentford cleared everything that came their way.

The second half was much better from the Blues. Up-tempo play and they kept the ball on the ground that made Brentford work harder. Scott Vernon had a shot drift harmlessly wide of the target before influential midfielder Alan McCormack lined up a shot from 25 yards which just went over the bar.

Just before the hour mark Southend were level through Francis Laurent. Franck Moussa did well on the wing to play in the Frenchman who showed great skill to fire a shot from close range past on loan Arsenal keeper Szczesny.

Moussa was impressing on the wing after his suspension and went mighty close to giving the Blues the lead when Laurent's quick feet set up an opportunity for the Belgian who just couldn't keep his effort down.

The Bee's, fresh from beating Huddersfield Saturday, got on level terms just 6 minutes later through former Blues defender Leon Cort's brother Carl. Despite Southend being on top, the striker curled home a wonderful effort, to silence The Hall.

Just 20 seconds later, Southend were level, when Laurent poked home from close range. Franck Moussa was again involved as his cross fell into the path of Laurent who placed home.

Blues kept pushing and went close through Christophe but his shot went wide of the goal. Southend are back in action on Saturday at home against Brighton where three points is a must.

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**Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2010**

**Southend United 0-1 Brighton & Hove Albion**

Blues XI: **Steve Mildenhall, Simon Francis, Pat Baldwin, Jean-Yves M'Voto, Johnny Herd, Jean-Francois Christophe, Anthony Grant, Alan McCormack, Franck Moussa, Francis Laurent and Scott Vernon.**

**Southend United's League One status is hanging by a thread after a 1-0 defeat at home to Brighton. An Ashley Barnes prodded strike in the first half was enough to earn the South Coast side 3 points and leave Southend in serious threat of relegation.**

After a great second half against Brentford in mid-week, it looked like Southend had left off where they had started, as they had a few decent efforts early on. Former Swindon goalkeeper Brezovan made a save from a Simon Francis free kick as the Shrimpers tried to kick-start their survival push.

It was then Johnny Herd's chance to try his luck but could not keep any composure and fired well off-target. It was the story of Southend's season as they did not take their chances and against the run of play Brighton took the lead.

Sheffield United loanee Lee Hendrie drilled a shot goal wards and Plymouth loanee Ashley Barnes just poked out a foot to divert the shot past M'Voto and then Steve Mildenhall.

Brighton seemed to play with more confidence after that goal and the whole of Roots Hall was in shock just before half-time when Jean-Francois Christophe failed to get anything on a world class free kick from Simon Francis.

The game turned into a very dull affair but Brighton nearly went two goals up when Glenn Murray beat Mildenhall to the ball but the goalkeeper made amends to pick the ball away from the goal line.

Steve Tilson must have given the Blues the kick up the backside they needed and they nearly went in front when Scott Vernon somehow put the ball well wide of the target when only a few yards out after good work by Laurent.

It was Vernon again that went close but Peter Brezovan denied the forward. Then a few moments later tempers flared as McCormack went to head the ball and Laurent took the ball off his head then to receive a mouthful from Macca.

The best chance fell to Francis Laurent who held off the challenge from Painter, before skipping past another defender, only to see his clever chipped finish just drift wide of the goal.

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Youngster Harry Crawford came on and looked lively and was denied by Brezovan as he tipped his header over the bar. Time just ran out of Southend who now look very likely to be playing in League Two next season.

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**Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2010**

**Oldham Athletic 2-2 Southend United**

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

**Journey:** 8 out of 10. Great journey there and back.  
**Stadium:** 4 out of 10. No atmosphere in the ground and one of the stands has been knocked down for a few seasons now.  
**Food Quality/Service:** 7/10. Decent service at the ground.  
**Programme:** 6 out of 10. Not impressed with the quality of the paper, but still had decent information.  
**Performance:** 6 out of 10. A very slow start which left us with too much to do. Great desire towards the end though.

**Southend United have been relegated to League Two after only securing a point away at Oldham. After a poor start, Southend brightened up, but it was not enough to secure their League One status and they return to the basement division for the first time since 2005.**

It was to be the worst possible start for Blues when they conceded inside a minute. Johnny Herd made a mistake and the ball fell to Pawel Abbott who in turn played the ball to Whittaker. The midfielder then unleashed a volley on goal, which Mildenhall should probably have saved.

Just 4 minutes later Blues were level. A long throw by left-back Johnny Herd was helped on by a combination of Baldwin and Vernon before Francis Laurent reacted to the ball to power home a close range header past former Blues favourite Darryl Flahavan.

There was a five-minute spell of disaster for Southend that typified their season. Captain Adam Barrett had to leave the field after a recurrence of his hamstring injury and just moment later their lost winger Francis Laurent with another hamstring injury. Jean-Yves M'Voto and Jean-Francois Christophe replaced them, respectively.

Oldham looked like the side more likely to score and they did with just 2 minutes of the first half remaining. Left back Black evaded three or four challenges before firing a shot past Mildenhall in the Blues goal.

Just before the break Southend were gifted a glorious chance of drawing level again when Anthony Grant was clear through on goal with only Flahavan to beat, but the former Shrimpers number one saved well with his feet.

Southend started the second half well and should have gone level after Vernon and Paterson missed sitters. The Colchester loanee shot straight at Flahavan and former Southampton striker Paterson fell over with an open goal at his mercy.

It was Paterson again that should have done better when in front of goal but the striker lashed harmlessly over the bar when it looked easier to hit the target.

Just after bringing on Crawford for Paterson, Christophe went off injured, so Southend had to play the rest of the game with 10 men but continued to come forward.

It was the sub Crawford that made the 2<sup>nd</sup> goal after good work down the right and a wonderful cross, defender Jean-Yves M'Voto powered home a header, to set up a grandstand 10 minutes. However, nothing did not materialise, and Southend are relegated back to League Two after a 5-year absence.

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**Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> May 2010**

**Southend United 2-1 Stockport County**

Blues XI: **Steve Mildenhall, Simon Francis, Pat Baldwin, Jean-Yves M'Voto, Johnny Herd, Stuart O'Keefe, Anthony Grant, Alan McCormack, Franck Moussa, Harry Crawford and Scott Vernon.**

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**Southend United ended their home season with a 2-1 win over rock-bottom Stockport County. Harry Crawford and Alan McCormack netted for The Blues after they fell behind to a header from former loanee Jabo Ibehre.**

Southend started the brightest on this dark and damp afternoon and nearly went ahead when Pat Baldwin went close with a header. The atmosphere inside Roots Hall was yet again, spot on, and they thought they were celebrating the Blues taking the lead but were left disappointed to see the linesman's flag up.

McCormack latched onto an O'Keefe past before brilliantly hooking the ball over the goalkeeper, but it was ruled out, a superb start though.

It was McCormack that yet again went close to scoring in almost a carbon copy of his off-side effort. A slick one-two with Scott Vernon left the Irish midfielder in plenty of space but he rushed his shot and it went wide of the goal.

That was to be the last real action of the first half as Stockport hardly threatened the Southend goal. However, it was somehow intriguing, because both teams were playing decent attacking football and trying to make it a good spectacle.

Stockport started the second half better and went close through former Manchester United youngster David Poole, but his shot went well over the cross bar. Southend looked slow and lethargic as the end of the season syndrome kick in.

Just moments later former Blues striker Jabo Ibehre opened the scoring for The Hatters. A ball whipped into the box by Danny Pilkington was met by a powerful glancing header from the man on loan from MK Dons to place the ball past Steve Mildenhall.

Stockport started to sit back after opening the scoring and that proved costly as Irish youngster Harry Crawford netted on his first start of Southend. Johnny Herd ran down the flank before placing a dangerous cross into the area which Danny Swailes got his head to, but Crawford got the final touch to send the ball over the line.

Substitute Matt Paterson added the extra spark to Southend's attack and nearly scored one of the best goals of the season when he smashed a first time volley from an acute angle at 25 yards out, which was brilliantly saved by Rigby.

Southend did make sure of a winning end at Roots Hall when McCormack powered home a header from 12 yards after sublime skill from Matt Paterson on the left wing.

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**Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2010**

**Southampton 3-1 Southend United**

**Blues XI: Steve Mildenhall, Simon Francis, Jean-Yves M'Voto, Pat Baldwin, Johnny Herd, Franck Moussa, Alan McCormack, Stuart O'Keefe, Anthony Grant, Matt Paterson and Harry Crawford.**

**Journey:** 8 out of 10. It would have been a 10 if there was not any horrendous traffic outside the ground which took 45 minutes to clear.

**Stadium:** 9 out of 10. Fantastic atmosphere and a terrific arena.

**Food Quality/Service:** 7/10. Decent service at the ground.

**Programme:** N/A. No programmes on sale, what a joke.

**Performance:** 8 out of 10. A brilliant, gutsy performance from Southend, but the same old story. Mistakes in the defence and did not take our chances.

**Backed by a yellow and blue army, Southend United put in a superb performance against Southampton, but came up short after conceding two goals in the final 5 minutes. Franck Moussa's fantastic curling effort gave the Blues the lead before a Rickie Lambert double and a close range shot from Adam Lallana gave the Saints the 3 points.**

Southend started really well and went close to scoring when Jean Yves M'Voto headed over and the Shrimpers piled on more pressure when the former Saints forward, Matt Paterson, clipped a ball into the box which was heading to the unmarked Crawford but Kelvin Davis did well to palm the cross over the bar.

Southampton took ages to get started and by that time they could have been a few goals down if it wasn't for Davis. This time the former Sunderland stopper got down well to save a strong shot from Franck Moussa.

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Southampton woke up a bit and went close through Dean Hammond, David Connelly was denied by a brave stop by Mildenhall and Rickie Lambert saw his free-kick drift wide of the post as the first half whistle was blown.

The Shrimpers were proving more than a match for the South-Coast side and the Blues had Mildenhall to thank when he palmed away a low Lambert free kick as the hosts piled on pressure.

After withstanding the Saints onslaught, Franck Moussa gave the Blues the lead, with a fantastic finish. The youth-product, received the ball after a nice back-heel from Johnny Herd, before curling a superb effort into the far top corner of the goal to send the 1,000+ support crazy. Matt Paterson and Harry Crawford both missed decent chances for Southend before Rickie Lambert got on the score sheet as he powered home a Papa Waigo cross.

Steve Mildenhall was in superb form as he saved well from Lallana, Papa Waigo and Otsemobor but he could not manage to prevent Southend going 2-1 down after Rickie Lambert placed a penalty past the goalkeeper after Jean M'Voto conceded a penalty.

Marcus Milner replaced Stuart O'Keefe to make his debut for the first team but seconds later the game was wrapped up when Adam Lallana beat the off-side trap to clip home over Mildenhall.

*22<sup>nd</sup> May 2010*