

NEWSLETTER – Vol. 7 Iss. 05. – March 2012

THE INTRODUCTION – Paul FitzGerald

All change.....

Long-time Portsmouth fan/ part time Chief Executive/ part time cage fighter finally announced what a lot of people suspected - he'd seen enough of Ron and has headed back to the city, leaving the hot seat empty. I doubt whether many people couldn't guess who would step into that particular breach and sure enough, a few weeks later long time Southend fan with deep pockets and occasional director, Gary Lockett was announced as his replacement. The Trust believe that this is probably the best possible scenario at the current time and look forward to a more positive period for Southend United Football club.

Five minutes or so later and local hero Freddy Eastwood appears at a reserve game....the rumours start and before you can say Bilel Mohsni....the rest is history. Despite our current position and recent results, it's difficult to argue that the season has been anything other than "interesting" and I'm looking forward to the run in, with much anticipation.



In the last newsletter, I mentioned that the Trust are on the look-out for a new membership secretary – this highly paid role has so far attracted a round number of responses so I have moved the plea up the page....surely someone out there could spare a few hours a week to help us with this and join our hardworking group to both help the Trust and of course the club we all love.

In line with the support of the club, our membership and finances have taken a small downturn and in an effort to reverse this we are re-doubling our efforts to attract supporters and in particular, find more innovative ways to raise funds. Please help us to achieve this if you know someone who should be a member – send them our way....if you have an idea for fund raising likewise. We'd really appreciate your help so that we can continue to support the club and in particular, our commitment to the youth setup.

Sometimes, people do amazing things and I'd like to bring your attention to two such Southend Supporters:

Firstly - in the last newsletter I mentioned Bob Mays and his walk (for Help for Heroes) – please take the time to read his plans below and if you can support it, Bob and his team would really appreciate it. Certainly, everyone at the Trust is very proud of Bob and wishes him and his team all the best. Bob is not only an ex-policeman but also an ex-serviceman and very much wanted to support this wonderful charity to help our heroes returning from Conflict with such devastating injuries, for some, requiring a lifetime of care. You will find details of how to help him support this worthy cause, further on in the newsletter.

Secondly, young Matthew Pointer (Year 6) – he is featured in our latest SJS Newsletter, but as he attempts something amazing, I wanted to bring your attention to it – the very best of luck Matthew!

In August last year, Matthew took part in the St Luke's Hospice 5km Charity Fun Run held at Gloucester Park, Basildon. The event was supported tremendously, and raised over £8,500 for the Hospice.

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Having run previously for the Bobby Moore Fund shortly after his Granddad died, Matthew, was keen to continue being involved in events into 2012, but is restricted in the distance he is allowed to run because of his age, and the number of organised events held within the area. So, it was suggested that Matthew organise his own events within the surrounding area of his home in Benfleet, which St Luke's Hospice have agreed to support and help coordinate.

The idea is for Matthew to run 5km each month throughout 2012, in a different location. Matthew must run with his Dad (for safety reasons), though. Matthew will determine the pace and the time he achieves. Currently, he is running the distance in just under 30 minutes, and hopes to improve on this where possible throughout the year.

So far, Matthew has completed his first two runs, with a third due to take place any day. In April, Matthew will be making his 5km run at Southend United's training ground and with the full support of Graham Coughlan and the players, who will be running with him for part of the way. I'll be there to watch and support him, and hopefully we'll have some photos to put in the next newsletter. This is Matthew's page for donations www.justgiving.com/matthewpointer5km

BEST OF LUCK TO MATTHEW FROM ALL AT THE SHRIMPERS TRUST!!!

GET WELL SOON FAB...



The whole of the footballing world was shocked when Fabrice Muamba collapsed during the FA cup quarter final vs Tottenham.

It was a tragic moment and took myself back to the passing of the late Mike North, the referee who passed away at Roots hall and I certainly thought the worst watching the incident live.

It's looking like Fabrice is on the mend, but I would like to take this opportunity to wish Fabrice Muamba well on behalf of the Shrimpers Trust.

BOB MAYS : HELP FOR HEROES SPONSORED WALK

On 25th April Bob Mays and several other SUFC Supporters will start a 100 mile sponsored walk to Oxford United to raise funds for the 'Help for Heroes' Charity.

The following is the proposed timetable for the walk and other events leading up to it.

On 20th April 2012, for the home game v Barnet FC there will be a Help for Heroes Bucket collection aided by the local Army Cadet Force. Bob will be collecting 2 x Chelsea Pensioners from their hospital and conveying them to the game where they will have a pre-match meal. It is also hoped to get some regular soldiers there too. It is Bob's intention to have a Cadet, Pensioner and Regular Soldier walk the match ball to the referee.

On 25th April 2012 at 7.30am, the ground will be opened and Bob and the team will be taken to the centre circle where they will be given a match ball by the Mayor of Southend at 8am. He will also make a speech on the walkers behalf. It is hoped that Ron Martin, Geoffrey King and some of the SUFC playing staff will be in attendance. Local media will be there to record the start of the walk. Bob and his team will then walk to Barking and stay overnight in hotel accommodation.

On day 2 they will be having a brief stop at Tower Hill and getting some photos with the Beefeaters and then attending Wellington

HELP for HEROES
Support for our Wounded

Southend Utd. Fans
100 Mile Sponsored Walk
from
Southend Utd. to Oxford Utd.
for
Help For Heroes
25th to 28th April 2012
PLEASE SUPPORT US!

Participants: DJ Reeves, Joel Reeves, Bob Mays, Paul Marshall, Paul Redding, Steve Hayes, Neil Donald, Sarah, Gareth Ramsey, Trevor Piskford

Donate at www.bmycharity.com/bobmays or email bob.mays55@gmail.com

Sponsored by: facebook, HI-TEC, ROCKETFOOT

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Barracks where they have been invited to pay our respects and gratitude to the soldiers. They will then carry on walking to Uxbridge and stop over in accommodation provided by the local TA.

On Day 3 they will walk to Wheatley and stop over in hotel accommodation.

Bob has been in touch with OxVox, The Oxford United Supporters Trust, who are going to support their cause and it is hoped on Day 4 to meet up with them and walk the last couple of miles together. Details are still to be confirmed by Oxford as to what time they the walkers to appear at the ground, however they will enter the field of play tunnelled by both sets of players and deliver the match ball to the referee. There will also be a bucket collection on this day too.

SUFC are allowing the use of their Community Bus as safety Vehicle.

Bob is hoping for as many fans as possible that are free to attend Roots Hall on our departure date to wish them well on the walk and to obviously meet them as they enter the Stadium Route at Oxford.

The Shrimpers Trust would like to wish Bob and his team the best of luck for the walk. If you wish to make a donation to the cause you can do so here www.bmycharity.com/bobmays

COMMITTEE CORNER

Since our last newsletter, the Shrimpers Trust committee have started producing blogs to allow you folks into our lives, these can be found on the website.

This week it's the turn of former Trust Vice Chair Bryan Woodford who writes about his recent trip to watch the Blue's at Hereford

His blog plus those from previous weeks can be found on the Trust Website here www.shrimperstrust.co.uk/home.asp?page_id=384

FORTHCOMING FUNDRAISERS

RACE NIGHT

Saturday 31st March 2012
The Shrimpers Bar, Roots Hall

With 8 Brand New Horse Races and novelty race if times allow, this is a great event for all the family.

Admission will cost just £2.00 and you can pay on the door on arrival.

So why not come along for a fantastic night of entertainment.

For further details contact Paul Yeomanson: (01702 302373 or info@shrimperstrust.co.uk)



QUIZ NIGHT

Saturday 21st April 2012
The Shrimpers Bar, Roots Hall

The Shrimpers Trust will be holding their final Quiz Night of the Season in the Shrimpers Bar, Roots Hall on Saturday 21st April 2012.

The doors open at 7.00pm with commencement of the quiz at 7.30pm sharp. The cost will be £10.00 for adults and £6.00 for under 16's.

Included in the price will be a choice from 5 meals (*Chicken & Chips, Chicken Nuggets & Chips, Sausage & Chips, Fish & Chips or Vegetarian Spring Roll & Chips*). The meals are provided by the Fish House and will be served at around 8.45pm.

Ideally we need tables of 8, but if you would be happy to join others who will come in parties of less than 8 please let us know.

For further details or to book a table contact Alan Perry (01702 476458 or alanperry4@hotmail.com)



FUNDRAISING

100 Club

The latest winners in the scheme, pulled out of the hat during weekly draws since the last newsletter were Lesley Hicks, Phil Cox, Tim Wilson, Donna Stone, Paul Yeomanson and Richard Cunningham, each winning around £28.00.

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 476458 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 around £28.00 per week at the present time.

Quid-a-Goal

Our Quid A Goal scheme is now drawing to its conclusion for this season and we have so far raised a total of £1605.25

Once again for the 2011/12 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 to 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 completing the QAG Entry Forms that are available from the Trust Stand in the Shrimpers Bar.

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



MEMBERSHIP

Life Members (Total 202)



Life Membership of the Trust currently costs £75.00 if you have an email account or £100.00 if you prefer to receive Trust Mailings by post.

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

Ryan Dalby, Chris Diani, Lee Doherty, James Gibson, Michael Gibson, Dean Glover, Alan Hale, Raymond Hills, Christopher Lawrence, Chole Nicol, Edward Quinlan, Ryan Soar and Oli Thompson.

****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**, by email to membership@shrimperstrust.co.uk 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 ****

WELCOME HOME FREDDY.....



Last week, it was the news that had a smile on the faces of all Southend United fans, the return of legend Freddy Eastwood.

The man who needs no introduction has recently been enrolled into the Shrimpers Trust hall of fame. Please check out our website to have a read.

Hopefully, we will be adding a new chapter soon to talk about how Freddy fired us back into League 1 and signed a contract see out the rest of his career with us. I can dream can't I?!?!

WHERE'S BILEL?

Southend United's controversial utility man and fans favourite Bilel Mohsni has had a rollercoaster ride since signing in September 2010.

Despite this ride I am sure many Southend fans would welcome Bilel back into the side and hopefully add some fire power into the search for promotion to league 1.

It had seemed that Bilel was set to leave after his train home back from Morecombe and asking to be substituted, with an announcement being expected weeks ago.

Since then, Bilel was spotted at the last home game vs Aldershot and was having talks with manager Paul Sturrock and then like anyone who has played Where's Wally, those loyal faithful who travelled to Bristol should have spotted our very own Wally.



BARBER'S BLURB – TERRACE TALK MATCH REPORTS

Saturday 4th February 2012



**Plymouth Argyle 2 (Chadwick 86, MacDonald 88)
Southend United 2 (Timlin 1, Martin 34)**

The only surviving game in League Two this weekend was at Home Park as Plymouth Argyle faced Southend United. A massive shout-out to the ground staff at Plymouth for getting the game on and from a neutrals point of view it would have been a smashing game, from my point of view, it was very frustrating.

After battling snowy conditions for the majority of the journey as soon as we arrived in Plymouth, the weather was wet, damp and very cold, as Southend looked to go back top of the league. Paul Sturrock made changes to the side that got thumped by Swindon, he brought in Bilel and Martin to offer width to the midfield after the strange formation played the other night.

The game started superbly for Southend as they took the lead inside 60 seconds. Liam Dickinson's wayward pass was cut out by the defence only for the back pass to hold up in the mud and Michael Timlin raced onto the ball and blocked Cole's clearance before the ball rolled into the back of the net.

The Shrimpers were miles on top in the first half and went close once again through Bilel Mohsni but his shot went over the bar. Liam Dickinson then charged down the left, swapping passes with Martin, before cutting the ball back for Gilbert who somehow totally missed the target from 6 yards out.

However, in the 34th minute of the game, Blues doubled their lead through Martin. A corner from Ryan Hall found its way to the back post and Liam Dickinson picked the ball up, controlled it, before rifling a shot across the box only for Martin to divert into the top corner of the goal.

The first half was so easy for The Blues but when they came out for the second half they seemed in a laid back attitude almost as if the game was already one. Bilel Mohsni nearly completed the game when his header was brilliantly kept out but little did Southend know that the game was about to turn on its head.

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Nick Chadwick scored a stunning 20 yard volley before debutant Alex MacDonald completed an unlikely turn around when he prodded home from close range.

Blues Team: Glenn Morris, Sean Clohessy, Pat Baldwin, Chris Barker ©, Peter Gilbert, JP Kalala, Michael Timlin, Bilel Mohsni, Ryan Hall, David Martin and Liam Dickinson.

Barber's Blues M.O.T.M: Michael Timlin

Friday 10th February 2012



**Southend United 0
Rotherham United 2 (Harrad 9, Revell 83)**

Southend United suffered another poor home result as they went down by two goals to nil to mid-table Rotherham at Roots Hall. The recent run of disappointing form continued as loanee Harrad put them in the lead before former Blues striker Alex Revell fired a stunning shot past Morris which went in via the post.

In a slow start to the game neither side registered a decent effort on goal until Southend's winger Hall forced a fine save from Taylor in the Millers goal. Michael Timlin collect the ball on the left before floating over a fantastic cross into the box which found its way to Hall at the back post before the former Bromley man powered a header on goal which was clawed off the line by Taylor.

However moments later the visitors took the lead through debutant Harrad. The returning Bilel Mohsni saw his clearance charged down and the ball fell kindly into the feet of the striker who kept his cool to produce a stunning finish that flew over the head of Morris and into the top corner of the goal.

The goal seemed to have kicked Southend up the backside and they responded in the fashion you would have hoped for. Firstly Elliot Benyon tucked the ball away but it was ruled out for offside even though the ball came off a Millers player, secondly Liam Dickinson missed the target by inches after connecting with a Gilbert cross and thirdly Hall was denied superbly by Taylor again.

Despite not playing well in the second half, Southend had most of the chances and should have scored through Hall, Benyon and Grant before Moshni saw his header rebound off the foot of the post.

But the obvious happened in the 83rd minute when former Southend forward Alex Revell collected the ball, cut inside before launching a fierce shot, the went in off the post and it secured all three points for Rotherham.

Blues Team: Glenn Morris, Sean Clohessy, Bilel Mohsni, Chris Barker ©, Peter Gilbert, JP Kalala, Michael Timlin, Anthony Grant, Ryan Hall, Elliot Benyon and Liam Dickinson.

Barber's Blues M.O.T.M: Bilel Mohsni

Monday 13th February 2012



**Gillingham 1 (Tomlin 86)
Southend United 2 (Dickinson 10, Martin OG 31)**

Southend United returned to the top of League Two as they dispatched of play-off hopefuls Gillingham at the Priestfield Stadium. Liam Dickinson set the Blues on their way when he smashed home from close range before Ferdinand put the defence under pressure, forcing an own goal, to put the Shrimpers well in command before the break. Gavin Tomlin's late strike set up a nervy finish but Southend held on.

After the disappointment of Friday nights defeat against Rotherham we had the perfect chance to put it right and show the nation what Southend are about in front of the live Sky Sports cameras. Paul Sturrock made a few changes like he promised and it seemed to have been the right decision as Southend dominated the early spells and in the 10th minute they took the lead through striker Liam Dickinson.

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Sean Clohessy whipped the ball into the box, a fantastic cross, and the ball was diverted into the path of Dickinson by the head of Kane Ferdinand, and the big striker did fantastically well to shrug off the challenge of former Blues defender Richards before smashing the ball into the back of the net to put Southend in the lead.

The Shrimpers nearly doubled their lead moments after when Bilel Mohsni had an effort from distance. The Frenchman, playing in the midfielder, ran onto a ball before hitting it with his left foot, however, the Gillingham goalkeeper pulled off a stunning save to keep the score and one.

It didn't take long before Blues did add a second though. A great ball across the park from Mohsni found Martin, who knocked it past the full-back, got to the by-line, before cutting it back into the danger area. Ferdinand put the defence under pressure but the goal has been credited to a Martin own goal, the son of former Blues boss Alvin.

In the second half the home team were involved in the match a lot more but didn't really trouble Southend and it was pretty clear that Blues would be returning to the top of the division even though Tomlin's late goal set up a nervy end.

Blues Team: Glenn Morris, Sean Clohessy, Mark Phillips, Chris Barker ©, Luke Prosser, JP Kalala, Michael Timlin, Bilel Mohsni, Kane Ferdinand, David Martin and Liam Dickinson.

Barber's Blues M.O.T.M: Liam Dickinson

Saturday 18th February 2012



**Southend United 1 (Mohsni 74)
Crewe Alexandra 0**

Southend United kept top of the division on goals scored ahead of Cheltenham after Bilel Mohsni's close range finish was enough to separate the two sides at a wet and windy Roots Hall Stadium. The Blues have scored 7 more goals than Cheltenham and that is the reason they are top of the league as both sides have a plus twenty-goal difference.

After the win at Gillingham the other night it was vitally important Southend followed up that victory with another here at home, Roots Hall was once a fortress, but in the past couple of seasons the home form hasn't been that great. Manager Paul Sturrock made one forced change to the team as he brought back in Gilbert at full-back as he replaced Luke Prosser who was suffering from 'flu.

The early stages of the game weren't that exciting in all honesty but Southend were looking the better of the two sides and the most likely to score. Crewe are well known for their young academy players and decent passing football but the mid-table side couldn't really stamp any authority on the game as the likes of Timlin and JP Kalala were picking up the pieces in the centre of midfield.

Southend had the best chance of the first half and it was from leading goal scorer Liam Dickinson that had the opportunity. The ball fell to the striker who turned and struck his effort on target but the ball was cleared off the line and away from danger.

The powerful centre forward then had another opportunity but this time his shot went wide of the target. Crewe hardly threatened The Blues backline but when they did Clohessy, Barker, Phillips and Gilbert easily dealt with things.

The second half was a pretty similar story in all fairness. The Shrimpers brought on Ryan Hall and he was straight in the thick of the action as he provided an assist after his fierce low free-kick was saved well by Phillips but the rebound was prodded home by fans favourite Bilel Mohsni as Southend United stay top of the league.

Blues Team: Glenn Morris, Sean Clohessy, Mark Phillips, Chris Barker ©, Peter Gilbert, JP Kalala, Michael Timlin, Bilel Mohsni, Kane Ferdinand, David Martin and Liam Dickinson.

Barber's Blues M.O.T.M: Sean Clohessy

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Tuesday 21st February 2012



Aldershot 2 (Mekki 26, Payne pen. 64) Southend United 0

Losing this game the way we did was very disappointing but after the well documented events on Boxing Day it hurts even more. On the 26th December Southend were flying, they were by far the better team on that day and were leading through a Liam Dickinson goal and were a man up, but the tables well and truly turned as Mekki and Payne scored in either half to ensure a victory for The Shots.

Southend were not at the pace at all in the early stages and they didn't get any better throughout the first half and in the 26th minute Mekki scored his first professional goal to put the hosts in the lead. Full back Peter Gilbert kept backing off and off which allowed Mekki the room to try his luck from distance and his shot took a huge deflection off Phillips which put the ball beyond Morris.

The Southend goalkeeper then produced a stunning save to deny Danny Hylton a chance to score as he rushed out to block the forwards effort when he was one on one. Bilel then cleared a header off the line after Morris came and flapped at a cross. The Frenchman then had the first chance of the game for Southend but his header went aimlessly over the bar after a cross from Martin.

Despite the changes and things Sturrock tried to change Aldershot were far better on the night and in the 64th minute the home team were awarded a penalty after Morris brought down Hylton and the referee had no hesitation on pointing to the spot.

Josh Payne stepped up and put the ball past Morris to give the home side a confident 2-0 advantage. Benyon and Harris both entered the fray and both forwards endured a disappointing night as one missed a sitter and the other got injured within seconds of coming on.

Blues Team: Glenn Morris, Sean Clohessy, Mark Phillips, Chris Barker ©, Peter Gilbert, JP Kalala, Michael Timlin, Bilel Mohsni, Kane Ferdinand, David Martin and Liam Dickinson.

Barber's Blues M.O.T.M: N/A

Saturday 25th February 2012



Morecambe 1 (Burrow 75) Southend United 0

Southend United endured another disappointing result and performance as they were beaten by Morecambe at The Globe Arena. Burrow scored his first ever goal as he found space at the back post to poke the ball home, as Morris couldn't keep the ball out. This current run of form is not acceptable and Southend's slide down the table is not ideal at the business end of the season.

The hosts were the better of the two sides early on but their pressure didn't force any attempts on Morris' goal and Southend seemed to relax a little more. Despite the changes to the side the midfield and the whole team to be fair struggled to control the ball and no real chances were created by either team.

Chris Barker then blocked a shot from the Shrimps top goal scorer Ellison as the Blues still looked shaky at the back when that was their strength earlier on in the season. The arrival of Anthony Grant who came on the field for the injured JP Kalala sparked a change in formation and a slight change in fortune for Southend.

Liam Dickinson shot over the crossbar and Mark Phillips knocked a chance just wide of the post as the visitors looked to get back into the game. Even in the second half it was Southend that came closest to opening the scoring first of all as Bilel Mohsni saw his header rebound off the crossbar and away to safety.

Anthony Grant and Ryan Hall both then went close for The Shrimpers but the inevitable happened 15 minutes from time when the hosts took the lead. Mohsni was harshly adjudged to have fouled Alessandra and the

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forward dusted himself down before curling in a free-kick to the back post that Burrow got on the end of the cross and his tame effort somehow found its way through Morris' weak attempt of a save.

Anthony Grant then had a glorious chance to salvage a point for Southend but the midfielder somehow dragged his shot horrendously wide of the target from only 10 yards out.

Blues Team: Glenn Morris, Sean Clohessy, Mark Phillips, Chris Barker ©, Luke Prosser, JP Kalala, Michael Timlin, Bilel Mohsni, Ryan Hall, Jack Sampson and Liam Dickinson.

Barber's Blues M.O.T.M: Anthony Grant

Saturday 3rd March 2012



Burton Albion 0
Southend United 2 (Martin 60, Harris 75)

Southend United returned to winning ways after a comfortable victory away at troubled Burton Albion. Goals from two former Millwall players, Martin and Harris who were on hand to score for The Blues in the second half to fire Southend back into the automatic promotion places.

Blues had debutant keeper in the starting line-up, Cameron Belford, joining on loan from Bury to cover for the injured Glenn Morris. And it was Belford who thwarted the first chance of the game as he blocked well from a Brewers attack that included Richards.

Despite Southend having lots of possession during the first half, chances were few and far between much to the disappointment of the Shrimpers fans, even though we were happier playing better football on the ground rather than the direct football we have seen recently.

Neil Harris was proving a threat up front for Southend and the former Lions forward was enjoying probably his best performance in a blue shirt as he had a couple of efforts on target, one forcing the goalkeeper into a stunning save, as Southend looked to take the lead.

Belford in the Blues net was impressing as he was alert to any danger that came his way and just before the break Michael Timlin was inches away from putting Shrimpers in the lead but his shot drifted wide of the post.

Southend were still the better side in the second half and took the lead in the 60th minute through Dave Martin. The referee awarded a free-kick on the edge of the box and he was happy for Blues to take it quick, and it was the right decision as Martin curled home a shot into the top corner of the goal to give Southend the lead.

The impressive Neil Harris had a few half chances but his goal finally came in the 75th minute when he smashed home from 12 yards after the goalkeeper brilliantly saved an Anthony Grant half volley.

The hosts rarely threatened the Southend backline and Paul Sturrock's men held out for a comfortable victory.

Blues Team: Cameron Belford, Sean Clohessy, Mark Phillips, Chris Barker ©, Lee Hills, Anthony Grant, Michael Timlin, Dave Martin, Lee Sawyer, Jack Sampson and Neil Harris.

Barber's Blues M.O.T.M: Neil Harris

Saturday 5th March 2012



Southend United 0
Crawley Town 0

In this promotion six pointer, Southend and Crawley played out a goal-less draw in front of the Sky Sports cameras, and the Shrimper's were forced to play out the final 20 minutes of the match with only 9 men. Chris

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Barker was sent off for handball on the line and following all the substitutions being made, Liam Dickinson was stretchered off with an ankle injury.

Prior to the match I was feeling very confident after Saturday's result but there were some nerves present as this was a massive game for Southend. The weather conditions were not the greatest and it was evident from Belford's early kicks that the wind would play a major part in the match.

Crawley did not impress me throughout this game and their 'footballing' image wasn't present, they seemed more of a long ball team, up to the forward Shaun Batt. Torres had the first chance for the visitors but Belford on his home debut kept the ball at bay.

Belford, on loan from Bury, was the busier of the two goalkeepers, but Southend soon registered their first attempt on goal. Lee Hills long throw found its way to Sampson and the on loan Bolton striker controlled well before turning and firing a shot just wide of the target. Davis saw a shot saved well by Belford and that was shortly followed by an effort from Harris who should have done better when on the edge of the area.

Cameron continued to impress in the Blues goal and the visitors had the perfect opportunity to take the lead. The referee awarded a penalty after Barker was shown a red card for handling the ball on the goal line. The hosts felt hard done by as replays showed Torres handled the ball in the build up to the goal.

Clarke stepped up to take the penalty and the goalkeeper produced a stunning save to deny the former Blackpool strikers effort to send the fans into raptures. The task got even harder for Southend as they had to play out the remaining 20 minutes with nine men after Liam Dickinson was stretchered off with a nasty looking ankle injury.

Blues Team: Cameron Belford, Sean Clohessy, Mark Phillips, Chris Barker ©, Lee Hills, Anthony Grant, Michael Timlin, Dave Martin, Lee Sawyer, Jack Sampson and Neil Harris.

Barber's Blues M.O.T.M: Cameron Belford

Saturday 10th March 2012



**Southend United 2 (Prosser 65, Benyon 76)
Accrington Stanley 2 (Devitt 41, Amond 90+2)**

A goal in the dying seconds by Stanley's Amond was enough to ensure a point for the ten men on the road. Blues fell behind just before the break but goals from Luke Prosser and Elliot Benyon seemed to have given The Shrimpers the three points but in the final seconds of the game a mix-up defensively from the corner led to the visitors snatching a late point.

Accrington started reasonably brightly and Belford had to be on hand to block an incoming shot before Mark Phillips showed bravery to clear a cross which was going into the far corner of the goal before ploughing into the post, fortunately for Southend, the centre-half was able to continue.

The Blues did play some decent football at times but their threat on goal was minimal and they only had Dave Martin's dragged effort wide of the target to really show for the first half. Despite being the better of the two teams it was the visitors that had more shots on target and they did take the lead just before the break through on-loan Hull City midfielder Devitt. The midfielder cut in from the left before unleashing a fierce drive that went in off the South Stand post and into the bottom corner of the goal.

In the second half Southend played a lot better football and had more shots on goal as they looked to turn the match around. Jack Sampson and Lee Sawyer both had good chances go a waste and that was followed by Ryan Hall's shot that flew inches past the post as it looked inevitable Blues would finally score.

In the 65th minute they did through defender Luke Prosser. A corner from the left found its way to the back post where Prosser controlled superbly before curling into the bottom corner of the net to put the Blues level. In the 75th minute Southend were celebrating the turn around when Benyon netted his first goal for the club.

Harris pulled away at the far post to control superbly before helping the ball back across the area to his striker partner who took a touch before smashing a left-foot volley into the top corner of the goal. The visitors then had a man sent off for fouling Grant before Amond snatched a point in the dying seconds for Stanley.

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Blues Team: Cameron Belford, Sean Clohessy, Mark Phillips, Luke Prosser, Peter Gilbert, Anthony Grant, Michael Timlin, Dave Martin, Lee Sawyer, Jack Sampson and Neil Harris ©.

Barber's Blues M.O.T.M: Luke Prosser

Saturday 17th March 2012



Hereford United 2 (Arquin pen. 45, Elder 88)

Southend United 3 (Harris 2, Benyon 33, Hall 57)

Southend United moved back into the automatic promotion places after beating Hereford United away from home on Saturday. Goals from Neil Harris, Elliot Benyon and Ryan Hall ensured of the three points despite The Shrimpers trying their best to nearly throw it away. Phillips and Timlin also hit the woodwork as the afternoon's score line could have showed Blues' dominance a little better.

It was Southend that took the lead within 2 minutes through veteran forward Neil Harris. Cameron Belford launched the ball forward and it was controlled well by Elliot Benyon, the former Swindon forward played a cross over to Harris who controlled and shot into the goal via the far post. Confusion was raised as to whether the ball had crossed the line but the assistant awarded the goal.

Ryan Hall, recalled to the side, was causing problems and he linked up well with Harris on two occasions. The first effort was a header from the former Millwall goal scoring machine and the second was a shot just went over the bar. In the 33rd minute Southend doubled their lead through Benyon, who notched his second goal in as many games as he turned the ball home from 6 yards.

Just before the half-time whistle Hereford were offered a lifeline in a game that they were not really in. The referee judged Belford to have brought down Malone and Arquin stepped up to dispatch of the penalty. Southend were comfortable but a third goal was really needed to settle any nerves that may creep in.

In the second half The Blues were still the better side and Harris went close but the goalkeeper did well to put the striker off before Hall scored his 12th goal of the season to cement Shrimpers' dominance.

The winger scoring his first goal since January shot from 25 yards and the ball flew into the bottom corner of the goal. A Phillips header and a Timlin shot that hit the post as Southend could have stretched their lead followed that.

The hosts scored a late goal to set up a grandstand finish when Elder slipped it home, but Southend held on for another vital victory.

Blues Team: Cameron Belford, Sean Clohessy, Mark Phillips, Chris Barker ©, Luke Prosser, Christian Dailly, Michael Timlin, Ryan Hall, Kane Ferdinand, Elliot Benyon and Neil Harris.

Barber's Blues M.O.T.M: Elliot Benyon.

Tuesday 20th March 2012



Southend United 0

Aldershot Town 1 (Hylton 59)

Aldershot Town completed a double over Southend United as Danny Hylton's header on the hour mark gave the visitors a 1-0 victory and put a severe dent in The Blues' automatic promotion hopes. Paul Sturrock made three changes to the side that beat Hereford on Saturday but they seemed to be for the worse as Blues slumped to defeat.

Southend started the much brighter of the two sides with Dailly and Hall dominating the midfield, as the football being played was a delight to see. The recalled striker, Blair Sturrock, had the first chance of the game as he was on the end of flowing move but his shot was dragged wide of the target.

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The Blues were still the better of the two sides and another one of the other recalled players, Lee Hills, was bombing forward from left back and he latched onto a pass from Timlin before whipping in a stunning cross that nearly caught goalkeeper Young out his far post.

Aldershot did look a little brighter as the half was coming to a close with Josh Payne being the only spark for them, as he was at the previous fixture, but Cameron Belford in the Southend goal equalled all his efforts.

The start of the second half was bright from Southend yet again but they didn't really test Young in the Aldershot goal. Lee Sawyer dragged a shot a few yards wide after another great move including Benyon and Sturrock. However, in the 60th minute, the visitors scored against the run of play through top goal scorer Danny Hylton.

The striker ran through a crowd of players to meet a free-kick before powering a header past Belford into the bottom corner to send the 145 visiting fans into full voice. Sturrock made two changes as he brought on Martin and Harris for Sawyer and Sturrock respectively as Southend looked to get back in the game.

Joint-top goal scorer Ryan Hall was inches away from levelling the scores as his left-footed effort swerve just wide of the post as Young flew across his goal. David Martin then raced into the area after a mazy run but he dragged his shot agonisingly wide of the target as Southend looked for a goal.

Neil Harris then guided a header wide of the goal from 12 yards as Blues disappointed on another home fixture.

Blues Team: Cameron Belford, Sean Clohessy, Mark Phillips, Chris Barker ©, Lee Hills, Christian Dailly, Michael Timlin, Ryan Hall, Lee Sawyer, Elliot Benyon and Blair Sturrock.

Barber's Blues M.O.T.M: Christian Dailly.

25th March 2012