

South Bank Cuaco

Secretary's Report 2014/15

In my report for last season I referred to "the atrocious weather in mid winter which enforced the postponement of many fixtures both at home and away" which I was sure would not be repeated for a second and consecutive season. Well I was wrong because for this season it was far worse with the rainfall from mid November through to the end of February being responsible for the postponement of a total of 31 fixtures for the Club of which 22 were at home and 9 away.

Credit goes to Match Secretary, Liam Coughlan, for all remaining fixtures being arranged by 9th May which was the date imposed by the SAL by which the League programme had to be completed. Sadly though the Club could not field a 5th team in addition to the 1st team on that date resulting in the Club receiving a £50.00 fine from the SAL for not completing its season and the 5th team will commence the 2015/16 season with a 3 League point deficit in their Division.

The Herne Hill Flood Alleviation work which took place at Dulwich Sports Ground for the majority of the season resulted in the "road side" pitch not being available for the entire season as well as, for part of the season, car parking and access to Dulwich Sports Ground being restricted. The forbearance of members over this disruption was appreciated. The work having been completed as the season closed the "road side" pitch has now been relaid, the weather has been favourable and the grass is growing so hopefully the pitch will be in good playing condition for the start of the 2015/16 season.

It became evident during the second part of September that the Club did not have the strength in depth of playing membership and, therefore, by early October the 6th team was withdrawn from the SAL, the League Challenge Cup and the AFA Senior Novets Cup.

A concerted effort by Club Management coupled with the co-operation of several playing members to complete an Emergency Aid Course held in September the Club had by then reached the required criteria to apply for FA Charter Standard Club status which was granted by the FA on 4th November 2014. This remains in place for three years but the Club must complete a "health check" by end of March 2016. One of the benefits of the Club becoming FA Charter Standard was a part refund of £305.00 from the SAL of the Club's League subscription.

The 1st XI captained by Andy Judd finished in a creditable 8th position the SAL Senior Division 3 of 13 teams which is large number of teams for a SAL Division. The number of League games to be played was compounded by the abandonment of the match against Old Esthameians in February following a serious injury to Matt Steer after about 86 minutes play.

A 1-0 defeat to Bank of England in November curtailed progress in the AFA Senior Cup having lost 4-0 to a strong Old Salesians team the previous week in the AFA Surrey/Kent Senior Cup.

The 2nd XI captained by Laurence Collings ably assisted by Simon Manners achieved a respectable 8th place out of 12 teams in SAL Intermediate Division 3. The team was eliminated by Dorkinians losing 4-1 September in the first round of the AFA Intermediate Cup. In the AFA Surrey/Kent Intermediate Cup following a good victory by 6-3 over Richmond and Kingston Old Boys 1st in January the side met a very strong West Wickham Reserves the following month in the next round and were comprehensively beaten 15-1.

The 3rd XI captained by Keiren Reeves supported by brother Aidan had a dismal start to the season eventually picking up points mid season and finished 9th out of 10 in SAL Junior Division 3. There was a 9-1 loss to Carshalton 3rd in the SAL Junior Challenge Cup in October followed by a 3-2 victory over Southgate County 2nd team in the AFA Junior Cup before being beaten narrowly 4-3 by a decent Winchmore Hill 3rd team in that competition in November. The team despite many of the results played with tremendous spirit throughout the season.

The 4th XI captained by John Henry, together with the 5th team, propped SAL Minor Division 2 South finishing in 9th out of 10 teams. An end of season surprise victory by Merton 5th against HSBC 5th forced SBC 4th into a relegation position. In October the team had an enthralling victory over West Wickham 4th team in the AFA Minor Novets Cup on penalties 4-3 following 3-3 at full time and 5-5 after extra time. In November the team lost in the next round 5-3 to East Barnet OG 4th team. A strong Old Salesians 4th team eliminated the side from the SAL Senior Novets Cup 7-1 during October.

The 5th XI captained by Jake Hopwood and supported by Alf Grimsey struggled at times to field a team and indeed early season matches were postponed as it proved impossible to raise a team for some matches. This situation clearly reflected in the team's League performance finishing, by a margin, in bottom place in SAL Minor Division 2 South. In contrast and as an excellent example of Club spirit and commitment thanks go to Jake and several of the 5th team regulars who travelled to Old Esthameians on 9th May to represent the 1st team ensuring that the 1st's season was completed. As with the League competition opposition in the AFA Senior Novets Cup competition was too strong for the team losing 6-1 to Polytechnic 5th team in early November which was followed the next month with a 5-2 loss to Old Salesians 4th team in the SAL Senior Novets Cup.

The Ralph Salter Clubman of the Year Trophy has yet to be awarded as is also the case for the Club Team of the Year and the various "Payer of the Season" awards for each team.

We can look forward to these being presented at the Club's End of Season celebrations to be held on Saturday 4th July 2015 at Dulwich Sports Ground, Turney Road with full details to be circulated soon. Please do however "save" the date in your diary.

Edward Watson again took charge of the Club's training which commenced in Dulwich Park and later continued at Crystal Palace. As in previous years the thanks of the Club go to Edward for his training skills and enthusiasm which he contributed to the Club.

Together Luke Howard and Aidan Reeves jointly took on the role Club's Communications Officer and this proved to be a harder task than envisaged to manage the Club's website. The difficulties experienced are being addressed and an improved website for 2015/16 can be expected.

Toff Choudhury was again responsible for organising the Club Tour to Prague in May which was a great success and much enjoyed by all those who toured with results on the pitch producing a 3-2 victory and a 2-2 draw.

I am pleased to report a significant improvement in the Club's Discipline record for the season, compared with the previous season, with just one sending-off offence which brought also a mis-conduct charge from the AFA for the player concerned and sadly having witnessed the incident it was all totally avoidable. There were a further 31 "yellow card" offences but overall the Club did not reach Stage I of the AFA Disciplinary process avoiding the imposition on the Club of a fine from the AFA.

I repeat what I said in my report for last season and hope for next season that there will be an improvement in the winter weather conditions and that the 2015/16 season will experience minimal interruption.

Enjoy your summer, retain your fitness and look forward to a challenging forthcoming season.

Colin Ferris

14th June 2015