

London Owls Newsletter

August 2012

www.londonowls.co.uk - londonowls.enquiries@gmail.com



Great turnout for game of two halves

Monday night saw a huge turnout of London Owls for what proved to be an eventful match in the first round of the League Cup (or Capital One Cup if you insist).

Over thirty Wednesdayites, including several new members, made the trip to our regular haunt of Mabel's



Tavern in Euston, as Owls fans packed out the pub and, eventually cheered the team on to victory.

Although it must be said, half way through the night not many in attendance would have predicted the eventual victorious outcome. Dave Jones has since described the first half performance as the worst he has ever seen from any of his teams and it would be hard to disagree. Wednesday simply looked off the pace in the first 45 minutes with Oldham first to every ball and pressing the away team all over the park.

Former Blade Jordan Slew opened the scoring on 7 minutes and it was now surprise when a lacklustre Wednesday back line then allowed Jean Yves Mvoto to ghost in at the far post to double the advantage on 27 minutes.

To compound the misery, Wednesday's new 9 and 10 front combination, Gary Madine and Chris Maguire were both forced off with knocks, and new Slovenian attacking midfield Nejc Pecnik pulled off the perfect emulation of a Waddle penalty. Our cup prospects were left hanging by a thread at half time.

But we should have had more faith than that and remembered that Dave Jones is undefeated, and maybe and undefeatable as Wednesday manager. In a blistering second half Wednesday knocked in four goals, including a brace from substitute Chris O'Grady and a lovely finish from Antonio on his first appearance as a permanent member of the S6 family. ➤



Useful Contacts

Email us

londonowls.enquiries@gmail.com
londonowls.membership@gmail.com
londonowls.travel@gmail.com

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www.facebook.com/londonowls

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www.twitter.com/londonowls

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www.londonowls.co.uk

Write to us

The London Owls, PO Box 233,
Borehamwood, Herts, WD6 3WA

Follow the Current Squad on Twitter

Cecil Nyoni - @CessK92
Chris Lines - @Linesy8
Gary Madine - @GaryMadine9
Giles Coke - @RealCokes
Jermaine Johnson - @DaRealJJ11
Julian Bennett - @B13NNT
Liam Palmer - @LiamPalmer12
Matthew Tumilty - @Matty_Tumilty
Michail Antonio - @Michailantonio
Stephen Bywater - @gjones123456789

Is there anyone we've missed? Drop us an email to let us know!

So how did it come about?



Well Dave Jones' half time team "talk" certainly seem to have had an impact, with Maguire later admitting: "We ended up getting a bit of a blast from him at half time. It's the first time I've seen that from him. He's a good manager, and him having a go lifted everybody. He hoped he didn't have to do it again". It's clear the team didn't want to face the manager's wrath again at full time.

However, on watching the game it's also clear that the enforced substitutions, and resulting change of shape overcame many of our problems in the first half.

Firstly, it's quite clear the Pecnik is not an all-round central midfielder. In the first half Jose Semedo was left as the only Owls' player tracking back and trying to cover the defence which invited undue pressure. Pecnik's position far up the field also left the defence short of options when trying to pass out of the back and so long balls became the norm.

With the addition of Coke alongside Semedo, Pecnik was excused his defensive duties and was pushed into a straight attacking midfielder's role. A hugely improved second half performance from the Slovenian followed and he could claim assists for two of our four goals.

Secondly, in the flat midfield four system employed from the beginning our flying wingers, Antonio and Johnson often received the ball too far back as they had to help cover the central midfielders and from a bank of four. This meant they would often have to beat two or three men before getting into a position to shoot or cross. With the addition of an extra central midfielder alongside Semedo, JJ and Antonio were able to receive the ball higher up the pitch and do damage to Oldham. Johnson arrived right at the edge of the penalty area to smash in our first (with a bit of help from a dodgy keeper) and Antonio only had one man to beat when he cut inside and bent a ball past the goalkeeper to make it 4-2.



Finally, last season's top scorer Gary Madine has missed much of pre-season with injury. And on Monday night he looked leggy and not in his full rhythm. The enforce introduction of O'Grady provided us with a totally different threat up front and the ball began to stick.

His battling performance not only resulted in two well taken goals but his physicality also created a lot of space behind him for our three main creative outlets – Antonio, Johnson and Pecnik – to do the damage.

The word is that Madine and Maguire will be ready for Derby on Saturday, but it remains to be seen if Jones is tempted to stick with the winning 4-2-3-1 formula we stumbled across on Monday.

Fantasy Football League

In preparation for the tough Championship season ahead, and for our inevitable return to the Premier League, we've set up two football fantasy leagues for London Owls to join.

I'm sure you'll all already have a team raring to go in the official Fantasy Premier League and are looking forward to taking on your colleagues, family and friends. But surely the prize of knowing you're the most knowledgeable Wednesdayite in all of London is the biggest of all.

The code you need to join in is **807277-350517** and if you haven't already created a team the website you need to visit is: fantasy.premierleague.com

Also, know we're back in the second tier we're actually able to select Wednesday players in a Championship online Fantasy League.

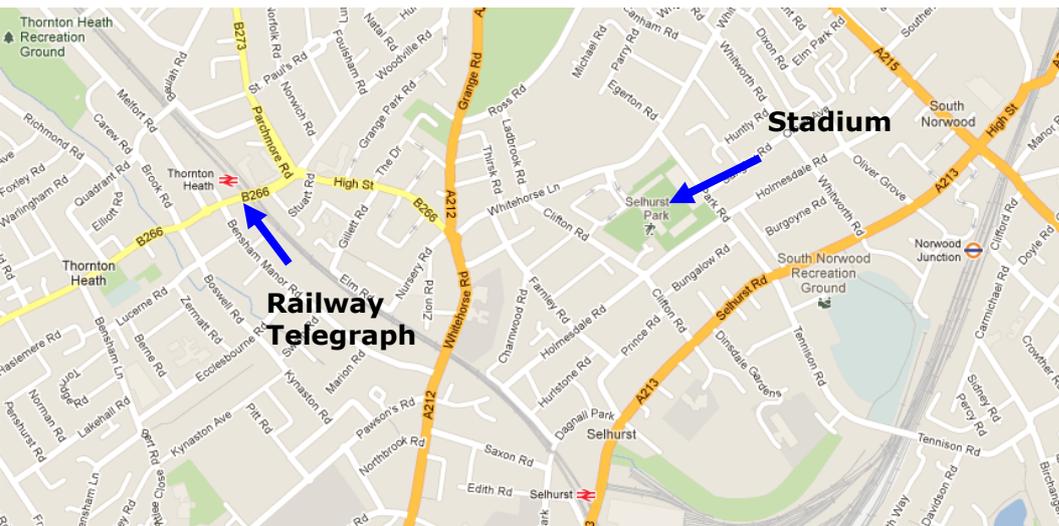
Simply go to fantasy.football-league.co.uk to enter, but hurry as the deadline to register is 7.30pm on 17 August.

The pin code to enter the London Owls league is **13163**.



Crystal Palace Details

The next big meet up will be before and after the Crystal Palace away game on Saturday 1 September, with tickets going on general sale to Wednesday fans this Monday. We'll be meeting at The Railway Telegraph (19 Brigstock Rd, Thornton Heath, Surrey, CR7 7JJ) which is easily walkable from the ground and the Thornton Heath, Norwood Junction and Selhurst stations.



Travel Details

As ever, The London Owls will be travelling to all forthcoming home league games, catching the 0955 outbound and returning on the 1827 for the price of £32. Please email iancol@clara.co.uk if you want to get involved.

Got a story to tell?

We're always on the lookout for new stories for the newsletter. If you have any contributions no matter how big or small please email mattkelcher@gmail.com or tweet @mattkelcher and they will be included in a future newsletter.