



# BSPL NEWS

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## Chairman's Corner

Unfortunately I have to let you know that St. James FC have withdrawn from the Belfast Sunday Premier League, leaving just seven teams in the first division. No doubt those teams in the first division are worried about their season being over just after Christmas. To offset this, we are going to run a First Division Trophy to give more games and continued interest to the teams still in that League. The format of this trophy will be two groups, one of three and the other comprising of four teams. Groups shall be decided by their League positions at Christmas, or after the games on the 21<sup>st</sup> December, 2003. Positions 1,3,5 and 7 will make up group 1, with 2, 4 and 6 making up group 2.

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# WHAT A FARCE

## Council Management of Pitches a Joke

**Belfast City Councils inept handling of pitches has cost the BSPL their first Sunday wipeout of matches in the 2003/2004 season**

By adopting a penny pitching and couldn't care less policy, the Parks Department of Belfast City Council caused the Sunday Premier League to cancel all fixtures on Sunday, 30 November, 2003.

On Saturday morning, all pitches were playable, but after a mid morning deluge, the pitches were all declared unplayable at 12 Midday Saturday.

Fairer weather ensued, and by Sunday morning an inspection of Ormeau showed that there was little if any water lying on the pitches and they were more than playable. When staff at Ormeau were asked, they stated

that the pitches were off. They stated that they were only Leisure centre staff and it was Ballysillan that was responsible for final decisions. one BSPL team Manager contacted Ballysillan, and was told that they pitches were playable, but they could not reverse their decision after calling them off. When the League Chairman spoke to them and attempted to query the situation, one voice in the background was heard to say, "Just tell him that they are all off". And so we had no football on the day, through no fault of anyone connected at the Belfast Sunday Premier League. However the matter is not finished there. The BSPL is a major user of Council Pitches at Ormeau and Cherryvale, and we intend to take the matter up fully with those involved to try and develop a pitch cancellation system more suited to Sunday matches which get prematurely cancelled on a Saturday, only to recover and be fit for play on Sunday

## PLAYER OF THE MONTH

The Player of the Month award will be carried forward to December as there is no outright winner this Month.

## EDITORS COLUMN

Once again Sunday Soccer is the poor relation of the footballing fraternity. As can be seen from this Months headlines, we are forced to lose a full week-end of matches all because the Parks Department are unwilling to pay someone to get out of their bed on a Sunday morning to assess pitches and reverse a decision made on the previous afternoon that they were unplayable.

On an annual basis the Sunday Premier League probably pays over £3000 per season for pitch hire, and must be one of the top four users of the Ormeau Park and Cheryvale venues.

Yet we are not deemed important enough to be provided with a facility whereby Parks Officials check the pitches if the weather has suddenly improved, or for that matter deteriorated since the all important Saturday fixtures. Had this been done, the Council who are forever crying out for increased use of amenities, would have been quids in to the tune of over £200.

The Committee of the League made strenuous efforts to give teams football last Sunday, even going to Ormeau at 10.00am to check the pitches themselves (And they were playable). Unfortunately we were met with a brick wall. the Council didn't want to talk to their poor relations.

## FAIR PLAY TABLE

**Standings up to and including 30 November, 2003**

TEAM	No. of Matches	Additional Disciplinary Points	Total Points from Yellow Cards (2 Pts per Card)	Total Points from Red Cards (4 Pts per Card)	Total Points	Average Points per Match
FORT FC	10		6		6	0.600
C/WOOD SKUNKS FC	12		8		8	0.667
BOCA SENIORS FC	11		6	4	10	0.909
BROOKVILLA FC	10		10		10	1.000
KNOCK FC	11		8	4	12	1.091
APOLLO ATHLETIC FC	9		6	4	10	1.111
DUB FC	9		6	4	10	1.111
C.F.A.N.I. FC	11		12	4	16	1.455
TURFLODGE STAR FC	12		10	8	18	1.500
GLENCOLIN SWIFTS FC	10	5	12		17	1.700
MONA STAR FC	9		16		16	1.778
ST. MICHAELS FC	9	5	8	4	17	1.889
RUSHLIGHT FC	11		14	8	22	2.000
ST. MATTHEWS FC	11		16	8	24	2.182
TRINITY LODGE FC	11		20	4	24	2.182
ADELAIDE FC	11	5	16	4	25	2.273
S.A. RAMBLERS FC	10		16	8	24	2.400

### HAVE YOUR SAY ON REFEREES

The Committee of the BSPL are currently investigating the possibility of giving teams a method of grading the performance of referees officiating at their match in order to provide feedback and give teams a chance to have some degree of

input in referees performances. The pilot scheme which may commence early in the new year could also be used as a vehicle to encourage referees to look at their own performances and information gained could be used for a referee of the month, simi-

lar to what players currently participate in.

It is hoped that teams will respond to this proposed scheme in a responsible and positive manner and use it in a constructive manner rather than a way to merely slag off the referees.

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Teams will play each other once in the group, with the winners in each group playing in the final. I hope you agree that once again the BSPL is giving the First Division teams a fair crack of the whip by giving them a similar amount of games to those in the Second Division.

Yours in Sport - *Gabe Derlin*

**TIME FOR A GURN**

The older teams in the League will remember the "Have a Gurn column" in which anyone that wanted to write into the BSPL News and, within reason, shout their mouth off about anything that was bothering them in the League. I would like to resurrect this, but in addition to outside letters from teams and players etc. I will use it as a means of letting teams know of anything regarding complaints or breaches of League Rules that they should know about. So Here goes.

*Teams, especially those at Cherryvale, are requested not to bang boots up against the walls of the showers in an effort to clean them, as it can crack tiles and plasterwork. The groundsman at Cherryvale has no objections to boots being washed in the showers as long as they are cleaned of excess mud outside the changing rooms.*

*All Managers are reminded that numbers on match cards must correspond with shirt numbers. This speeds up cautions etc. and prevents mistaken identity in disciplinary matters. A £2.50 fine for all those who do not adhere to the rule.*

**A VIEW FROM THE MIDDLE**

By Con Fox

As the season approaches the half way point, and with the withdrawals from the First Division, it appears that the Second Division will be the most competitive this season with games on the whole being close affairs. I know for a fact through talking to the referees that these types of hard fought contests are what they look forward to. They will always prefer to be in charge of a game where they are required to be involved in decisions rather than a match where one team is trouncing the opposition. Not only is it more interesting, but



just like players, referees do not mind their ability being tested and stretched, so long may good close games continue.

As this is the last magazine of the year 2003, may I take this early opportunity on behalf of all the referees of wishing everyone a very merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Hopefully the new year will see the current good relationships between referees and teams continue in the manner that it has done so far.

Yours in Sport - *Con Fox*

**POACHER TURNED GAMEKEEPER**

You may have recently noticed an addition to the panel of referees, with none other than our Secretary, Paul Devine taking up the mantle of refereeing. Paul recently successfully com-



pleted his basic referees course and started handling matches in the Belfast Sunday Premier League almost immediately (Although he has not yet had the pleasure of a top two First Division Grudge match.) . Paul finally decided to hang up his Adelaide playing strip (which recently was not used being used that much) and put his considerable years of footballing experience to good use by hopefully refereeing matches in a way that teams will appreciate as he sees things from an ex players perspective. Unfortunately "Young" referees do need a certain amount of guidance from their "Peers" and no doubt Referees Representative Con Fox will be having a word with Paul about the referees dress code and telling him to tidy himself up and tuck in his shirt.

## LEAGUE TABLES

### Standings up to and including 30 November, 2003

DIVISION 1					
	Pld.	Won	Drawn	Lost	Points
<b>ST. MATTHEWS FC</b>	6	5	1	0	16
<b>RUSHLIGHT FC</b>	7	4	2	1	14
<b>TRINITY LODGE FC</b>	5	3	1	1	10
<b>MONA STAR FC</b>	5	2	1	2	7
<b>TURFLODGE STAR FC</b>	6	2	1	3	7
<b>ST. MICHAELS FC</b>	5	2	0	3	6
<b>S.A. RAMBLERS FC</b>	6	1	0	5	3

DIVISION 2					
	Pld.	Won	Drawn	Lost	Points
<b>BOCA SENIORS FC</b>	8	6	2	0	20
<b>DUB FC</b>	6	6	0	0	18
<b>KNOCK FC</b>	8	5	2	1	17
<b>APOLLO ATHLETIC FC</b>	5	4	0	1	12
<b>BROOKVILLA FC</b>	7	2	2	3	8
<b>ADELAIDE FC</b>	6	2	1	3	7
<b>GLENCOLIN SWIFTS FC</b>	7	2	1	4	7
<b>FORT FC</b>	7	1	2	4	5
<b>C.F.A.N.I. FC</b>	7	1	0	6	3
<b>COLLINGWOOD SKUNKS FC</b>	7	0	0	7	0

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