



Chairman's Pre-season message to all OWFC Members 2020/2021

Last season in review

The Covid19 lockdown scuppered the 2019/2020 season with a third of the league matches still to play. The AFC decided not to estimate final positions so titles, promotions and relegations were cancelled. In the league our stand-out team was the First XI, who were top of the Premier at the time of lockdown whilst in the cups the 2nd XI made it to the final of the LOB Intermediate Cup and will now play their final during September – something to look forward to for sure. On a personal note, one of my finest playing moments with OWFC was skippering the 2nd XI to victory in this cup final in 1993, so I am very excited.

We were all delighted to see three of our first team represent the league – Chris North (as skipper), Sam Edis and Ross Fleming – congratulations guys!

We now field two Veterans teams on Sunday mornings and both were going well when the lockdown curtain fell. Mike Edis continues to do a great job promoting our veterans arm and it does the club credit.

Our disciplinary performance showed a welcome return to an improving trend with just two reds, around twenty-five yellows and no misconduct charges. Once again, and very satisfyingly for everyone, our Spirit of Football marks were top quartile across all headings. The key assessment, on Spirit of Football itself, averaged an all-time high of 8.46 out of 10. Our challenge of course, is to achieve another improvement in this rating – Old Wokingians has always prided itself on its sporting and respectful approach to playing our football. The club has won a great name for itself over the years and we value that reputation.

Socially we had another great club dinner last October, with well over a hundred members in attendance – and a really good time was had by all! Our Social secretary, Joe Eke, did a great job. It is unlikely we will be able to hold a traditional club dinner this year but we hope to be able to arrange some form of get-together and awards evening before the end of the coming season.

The annual 6-a-side due to take place this June was cancelled due to lockdown.

The WOPAs continued to offer great support both on the touchline and in the bar and the club is grateful to John Billing, our President, for organizing their attendance, and for managing the club's website.

Together with our associated club, Meadow Sports FC, we succeeded in obtaining free of charge a couple of moveable goals. We also agreed between the two clubs some important rules of the road for avoiding excessive or inappropriate use of the Loop Road pitches. Thanks are due to our Honorary Life Member, Dennis North, for his efforts on our behalf in helping to secure these

advances. Thanks are also due to Andrew Douthwaite who obtained a substantial grant from Woking Borough Council to support our joint efforts in dealing with life under Covid19 conditions.

Looking Ahead

OWFC is determined to build on the successes of recent years despite the challenge of Covid19. Our higher Saturday teams have improved their standing in the league considerably and we have reached several cup finals and our SOF marks are very good. Our ambition is to continue improving our results on the pitch and to do so in a way that makes us proud.

Our skippers for the coming season are Chris North and Jack Farrelly continuing to lead the 1s and 2s, Toby Godman takes over the 3s from Zak Inyang, Dan Donovan steps up to lead the 4s in place of Martin Meighan who moves to lead the 6s. Chris MacLaughlin will skipper the 5s in place of Tom Butler who moves to lead the 7s. Andrew Douthwaite continues to lead the 8s and we welcome back Liam Hockham as one of his VCs. Thanks to all the skippers last season and good luck to the above gents for the new season.

Friendlies begin in earnest on 22nd August and we have use of the Loop Road pitches from 5th September. League matches on Saturday are due to start on 19th September.

On Sundays, Spence Davern is to skipper the Vets 1s and Mike Edis will lead the 2s.

Our playing strength looks adequate for ten teams but, as always, we welcome with open arms new players and may well need a few as the season progresses.

Covid19

The biggest challenge by far is, of course, adapting to training and playing under the conditions created by the need to avoid the spread of Covid19. Things will certainly be different on match days. The impact on the conduct of the game itself is not too drastic – but arrangements before and after the game will be noticeably different. For example, social distancing will need to be observed at all times and we must provide contact details before every game to enable “Track and Trace” to be effective. We won’t be able to use the changing rooms before or after the game, nor the showers. We can use the toilets on a “one in one out basis” but not the bar – drinks will be served through a hatch to the patio area at Loop Road. We will all need to read the guidance and sign off to confirm that we have done so. And we must all “self-assess” before coming to a game to ensure we don’t have symptoms of CV19.

We are hugely fortunate to have Matt Lane as our Covid19 Club Officer. He participates on the league working group and has prepared a risk assessment and player guidelines, all of which are available here on the club website.

It won’t always be easy but if we pull together and stick to the guidelines we can all ensure the safety of everyone involved – and enjoy our football too!!

And Finally

The AGM earlier this year re-elected the club committee except for Paul Hewitt, who stood down as Vice Chairman after many years sterling service and he was replaced, I am pleased to report, by Andrew Douthwaite. Two of our MSOW Ltd trustees also retired, Dave Smith and Martin Dunkley, and they were replaced by Alex MacVean and Ray Kearney. We also elected both Simon Williamson and Mike Edis as Honorary Vice Presidents. The AGM voted to keep match fees unchanged.

This is my tenth and final year as your chairman and I am proud of the progress we have achieved in these years. The coming season presents new difficulties, for sure, but I am absolutely confident that the Old Wokes will once again rise to the challenge and shine out as the fantastic club we are all proud to be part of.

Come On You Wokes!!!!!!!

John Stent

Chairman