

## KILBRIDE IN THE NAME OF LOVE

**Delta Service B.U. ... 0**

**Kendall Wanderers ... 1**

With squad numbers swelling to 23 at the first O'30's game of the season, a 10:30AM, 6-0 demolishing of Holliston, it took an 8AM kickoff in Whitman to separate the wheat from the chaff. My own view on these early kick offs are well known, 8AM representing mid morning 'round our place, but for those not obliged to be up and wrist deep in dirty nappies before 6:00 an away fixture at 8:00 is, as my old primary school headmistress liked to say, an unholy pain in the balls.

The previous day's fixture list had seen the 3 Saturday teams play concurrently at Ceylon Park, a stones throw from club sponsor The Banshee, so an unmerciful session was always on the cards there. Yes this 8AM kickoff presented a tricky piece of administration for sure and with rhythmically monikered, Head Coach-Barry Roach absent with groin trouble, it was left to Asst Coach Dr Kilbride to keep the love of the club at the fore of the players minds and ensure a team of early risers were present to keep the foot on the pedal early in a season where much is expected of Kendall's Tricenarians.

And love conquered sense for 14 old boys ready to go at kick off with one other hurting and hurtling, fucking and jaysusing his way along the highway towards the field. New old boy Chopper Reid was a welcome addition to the squad while old old boy Johnny Law, surely the Status Quo of Kendall full backs, made yet another comeback.

A slight worry about the clashing of our black shirts with their navy variety was rectified by Kenny Mc's 7:59 AM, smoking, strolling, swaggering arrival with a bag of whites, a team was picked and we ran out thus:

John O'Toole in goal behind a back four of Mike Mc, Ronan, Kenny and Shane. The midfield saw Joe and RB on either wing with Chopper (age 29 "I'll sit") and Aido (aged 40 "...and you do the running") in the middle. Skippy and Collie (looking like Mr. Tayto with his hat off) were up front. Dennis, Johnny and Kiz were on the bench – soon to be joined by weary road warrior Donal.

Peep-peep and we were off.

How we survived the first 15 mins without conceding a goal God only knows. We played with all the energy of a man ball scratching and yawning his way out of bed, looking blindly for the light switch. Missed passes, lazy tackles, led footed, we were all over the shop as Delta jetted around the pitch taking control of the ground and air space. Within 10 mins a swinging cross from the left flank to the back post gave their forward a free header which he thankfully misplaced wide of the goal.

We slowly started to find our feet thanks in no part to the center back pairing of Ronan and Kenny who had to be lively in the face of the ongoing attack from the opposition. The subs coming in made the difference too, doubtless motivated by having to watch from the line as those picked ahead of them plod, fell and miscued their way around the pitch. We were way off the boil and a couple of half chances aside were lucky to get off at half time on level terms.

The second half was a different story and we started much brighter. Where before passes had drifted yards wide of their mark we now began to find feet and string a number of passes together. A wonderful combination down the left wing saw Denis find Ian, who skipped by one defender, around another and get to the by-line before pulling back a glorious ball for RB who unfortunately got underneath the ball (not literally of course, but hey if anyone could...) and hit a strong shot high and over the bar.

Another break not long after saw Ian (?) again put a ball in from the left finding Joe Regan wide open on the back post with just the keeper to beat. Joe had time enough to pick his spot and decide between hitting it with his white besocked right or black besocked left. Having chosen his right for accuracy over fashion the ball flew obliging past the keeper and the wee man whirled away victoriously.

Delta were no pushovers and were not giving up the game easily. They were pressing again and a balls up inside their own half between Johnny and Aido saw Delta's industrious midfielder win the ball in a dangerous area before whipping in a mean cross to the box. Finnan and Law owe keeper John O' Toole for the save he made from the resulting headed shot. It was straight but powerful and squirmed away before he smothered it and the chance of a Delta rebound.

The final third of the game was a sloppy one for the Kendall, failing again to find feet and hold the ball while Delta continuously remonstrated with referee for overlooking Kendall time wasting. Kendall, not wanting to be left out of the fun remonstrated with one another. Mike with Donal, Kenny with Denis, Donal with Denis, well Denis with everyone basically.

A flurry of forward play in the final minute from Delta saw them win a free kick just outside the box, O'Toole claw the cross from his far top corner and Chopper throw himself at the loose ball that followed.

It was a scrap, hard earned and barely deserved but when the whistle blew for time it was 3 points for the Kendall. Delta felt hard done by and continued to berate the referee, as Kendall looked on and tutted their disapproval from the unfamiliar lofts of the moral high ground.

High ground in the league too, as two wins from two see us top of the table. It's early season yet but it's ground we mean to hold.